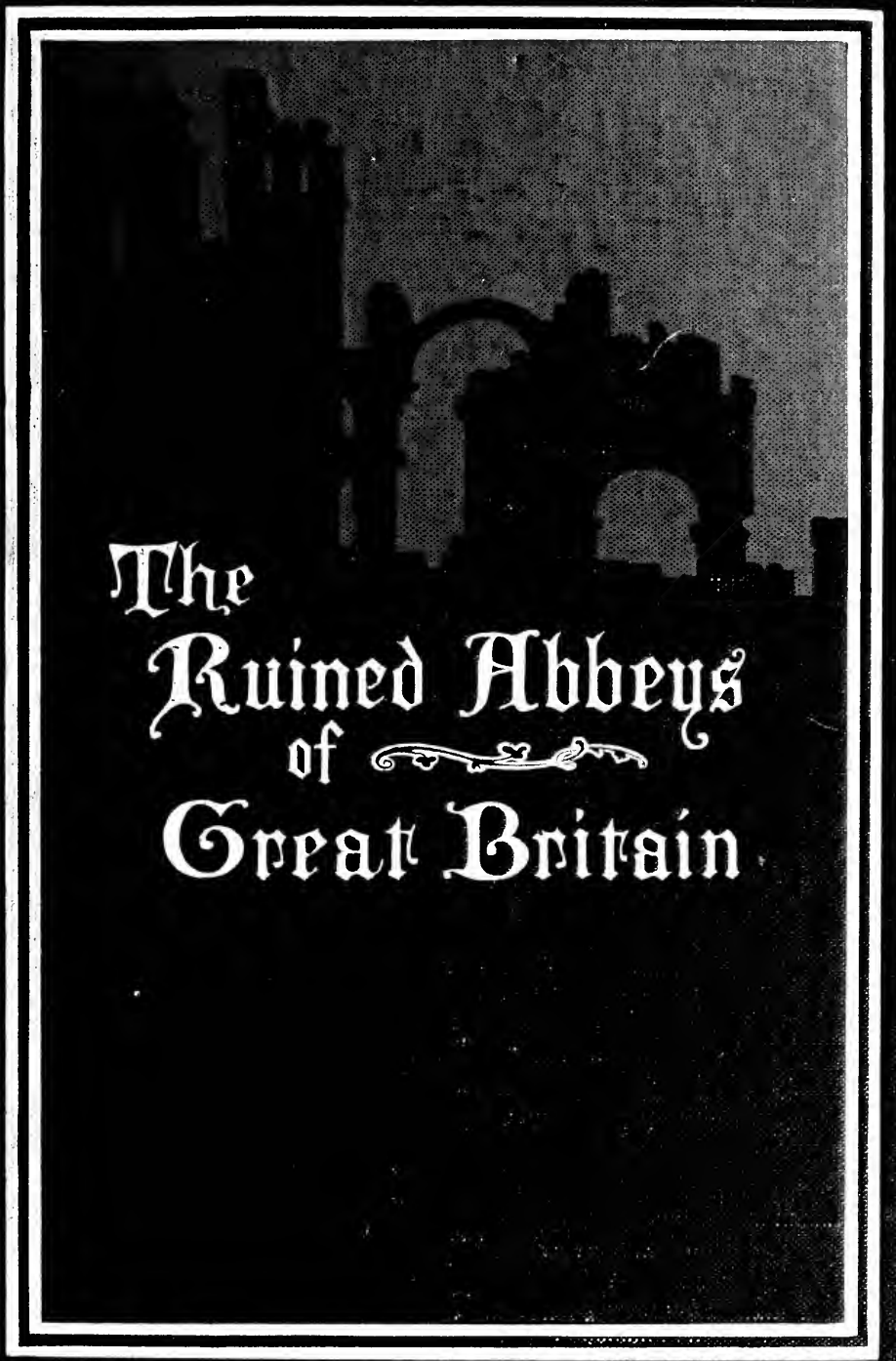
The
Ruined Abbeys
of
Great Britain

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The Abbey of "Our Lady of the Fountains."

BY

RALPH ADAMS CRAM

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To E. C. R. C., together with M. S. R. and T. B. M., this Book of the Ruined Abbeys of Great Britain is Dedicated, in Remembrance of the Pilgrimage to Certain Holy Places During the Year of our Lord MDCCCCXV, in which They all Took Part, and by Sympathy, Companionship, and Coöperation Rendered this Chronicle of the "White Robe of Churches" Less Inadequate than Otherwise it would have been.

Holy Cross Day, A.D. MDCCCCXV.

FOREWORD

"I HUMBLY crave leave, before I advance any farther, publickly to profess myself to be a sincere, though very unworthy Member of the Church of England, and that I have as true and as hearty Affection for her Interest as perhaps any other Person whatsoever. And yet I cannot but here publickly declare that I think it would have been more happy for Her, as well as for the Nation in general had King Henry VIII. only reformed and not destroyed the Abbeys and other Religious Houses. Monastic Institution is very ancient, and it had been very laudable had he reduced the Manner of Worship to the Primitive Form."

From the preface to Dugdale's Monasticon edition of 1718.

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INTRODUCTION

TO the monks England owed her conversion, and to them, in large measure, her civilization. For a thousand years monasticism flourished within her borders, suffering sometimes from failure, more often and more grievously from uncontrolled success, majestic always, and beneficent, though not always after the same model. In five years the material fabric was annihilated, but its memory remains, and will endure forever; this alone persecution was powerless to destroy.

It is hard for us of the twentieth century to form an adequate idea of the enormous proportions of English monasticism during the Middle Ages, or of the position it occupied in the life and economy of the times. We have been taught (as we have inherited the implicit belief) that, however pure it may have been in some mythical, far-off time, monasticism at the accession of Henry VIII. had degenerated into a poisonous canker in the body politic, richly meriting the sudden and terrible fate that then

befell; or, at the best, "whatever benefits the monks had conferred upon mankind, and these were neither few nor slight, they had become fetters on the advancement of freedom, education and true religion. . . . They were the unyielding advocates of an ideal that was passing away. . . . It was unfortunate that they had thrown themselves down before the car of progress, but there they were, they would not get up, the car must roll on, for so God Himself had decided, and hence they were crushed in its advance."*

We have come to regret, as amateurs, the unfortunate destruction of noble buildings, priceless books, and wonderful works of art, even feeling disposed at times to deplore the somewhat violent and sweeping measures of the Tudor king and his agents. That English monasticism was in its essential character no more deserving of destruction in the years 1536–40 than at any other time during its life of a thousand years, and that anything suffered except art, are thoughts that seldom suggest themselves.

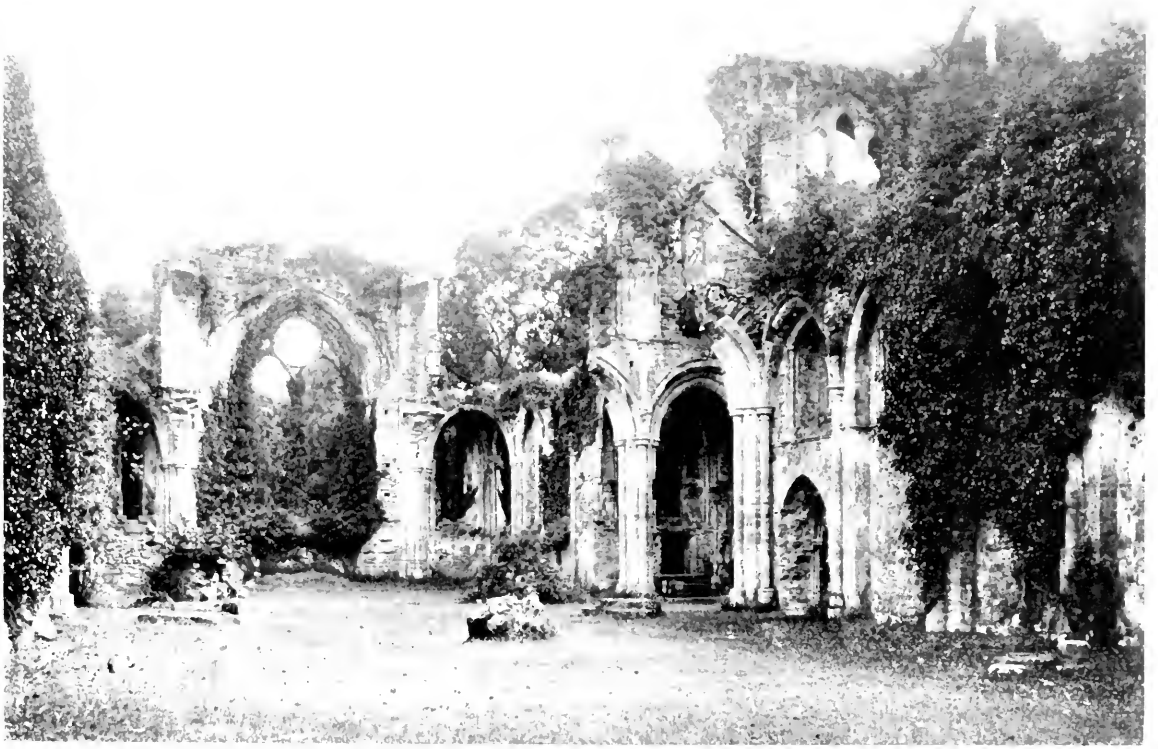
We look on the monastic system as on a special and peculiar form of religious enthusiasm and activity, the existence or extinction of which could have a bearing only on spiritual affairs;

*Prof. A. W. Wishart: "A Short History of Monks and Monasteries."

we quite fail to understand that it was a power in society rivalling even the civil government so far as the mass of the people were concerned, and that Henry's blow, while struck ostensibly at a detail of religious life, fell in actuality on the most highly organized form of Christian society then existing.

A monastery was, of course, a house of consecrated men vowed to poverty, chastity, and obedience, and bound to praise and glorify God night and day; but besides this it was a centre of law, order, education, and mercy, a Christian citadel in the midst of civil disorder. Somewhere, almost as far away as Heaven, were a king and his court, names only. At close intervals armies went raging across the country; why, few knew, and fewer cared. Now and then came laggard word of a king slain and of another reigning in his stead: these were the affairs of the nobles, the king's men, and they paid for their knowledge in service and money; for the people, the thousands over against the tens, they were matters of profound insignificance. The parish priest was the spiritual guide, the visible agent of the Church but the abbey, priory and convent were the signs of Christian society organized, unfailing, permanently operative.

We are prone to forget this aspect of the case, holding in mind always the idea of consecrated men and women withdrawn from the world for the better chastening of their human nature and the more absolute and unintermittent worship of God. We fail to remember that the many shortcomings and occasional impotence of the civil government had forced the orders to become what we should now consider civil as well as religious agents. The greater orders possessed vast landed estates freely given by numberless benefactors, who were themselves originally beneficiaries, — estates managed far more justly and generously than those of secular landlords. These same orders held other estates in trust, and acted as guardians for orphans and minors; they undertook the education of children, the preparation of candidates for holy orders, the maintenance of hospitals and asylums, the medical service of the neighbourhood, the relief of the poor, the entertainment of travellers. They were the teachers of the agricultural population in all things pertaining to their industry; they were themselves great producers of grain and wool; they employed large numbers of men in building, carving, printing, bell founding; they were the fosterers of architecture, painting, sculpture, illumination, embroidery, gold-smithery,



Netley—Looking down the Nave into the Choir

and organ building. They were at the same time fallible men, and their vast responsibilities sometimes bred failure, sometimes were responsible for a grievous falling off in spiritual things; but even if they failed now and then as religious, they succeeded as guardians of society. We read with amazement it may be of the majestic pageantry of some abbot's life; but we must remember that he was not only the head of a religious house, but as well a chief of the people, less a monk than a great Christian ruler, taking the place of secular powers that were frequently impotent for good. Viewed in this light, considering his enormous responsibilities and the amazingly varied nature of the functions he was called upon to perform, we shall find ourselves able to make allowance for him and for the priors and monks over whom he ruled. Called by the insistent clamour of the times to duties never contemplated by St. Benedict or St. Robert, the orders lost undoubtedly some portion of their original spirituality and self-abnegation; but, though they acquired a measure of worldliness, they acquitted themselves nobly of their new responsibilities, and for century after century were the guardians, the leaders, the benefactors of the people.

As we search through England for the melan-

choly shards of this marvellous institution, finding here and there at wide intervals a bit of crumbling wall, finding sometimes only a name, it is hard for us to realize how absolutely monasticism was a part of the intimate daily experience of all the people. Fate has left us in general the ruins of houses aloof from the common routes of travel and the present centres of population; it has wiped out utterly even the memory of hundreds of stately foundations; others have become cathedrals, and we think of them as having always been such, but the truth is that at the beginning of the sixteenth century, one could not travel a day's journey in any direction without coming upon some religious house where hospitality was to be had for the asking. Indeed in large sections of the country a man could safely count on leaving the guest house of one monastery in the morning, dining at midday at another, supping and sleeping in a third, and all without overexertion in travel. Bell answered bell from Lindisfarne in the north to Netley in the south, and from Yarmouth to Strata Florida. Thirteen hundred in number they were and more, counting abbeys, priories, nunneries, cells, and hospitals, besides twenty-three hundred and seventy-four free chapels and chantries. To the common people they were

the one great material fact in life, as they had been for generations unnumbered, as they would be, it surely seemed, for their children and their children's children to the end of time.

Another point to be remembered is that at this time, *viz.*, the accession of Henry VIII., the Church apart from the monasteries was in a bad way. Early in the fourteenth century the civil power, exemplified by the French monarchy, had asserted and established an unwholesome and impossible supremacy over the Church: the result had been the exile of the Papacy at Avignon which, brought to an end by St. Catherine of Sienna, only gave place to a greater evil, the Great Schism. "The Babylonian Captivity" lasted seventy-five years, the scandal of the anti-popes, thirty-five years more. Bishop Stubbs has called the thirteenth century "the golden age of the Church." It was this in the fullest degree, but at the very moment when Christian civilization had reached its highest point, the fostering power, the Church, succumbed to secular attacks, was beaten down into the dust, and through Avignon and the anti-popes was paralyzed and rendered impotent to stop the flood of paganism that was fast rising into the deluge of the Renaissance. But for the malignant hands of Philip the Fair

and Charles V., the Church, preserved from exile, royal tyranny, and schism, might have successfully resisted the new paganism even then dawning over the world, but this mercy was not to be, and the scandals of the fourteenth century made possible the still greater scandals of the fifteenth and the cataclysm of that which followed.

In spite of reforming Popes such as Nicholas V. and Pius II., Avignon and the Schism bore their inevitable fruit. Alexander VI., Julius II. and Leo X. followed, and chaos had come again. The flood of sin and deadly horror that overspread the Church on the continent broke on the cliffs of England and there was stayed; but if she escaped in a large measure, she was by no means unscathed, and at this time there were sufficient evidences of the terrible corruption that had disgraced the fifteenth-century Church. The bishops were only too often either absentee Italians or officials of the State; they were constantly called to high civil office with all that meant in loss of spirituality and abandonment of religious functions; pluralism. non-residence, and alienism were rampant; only the religious orders, and particularly the Benedictines, held in a measure to their spiritual duties while discharging most acceptably the

others that had been forced upon them. When Henry assailed monasticism he laid the axe not at the root of the moribund tree, but at that of the strongest and healthiest growth in the English Church.

And the people themselves knew this in the fullest degree. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the masterful and unscrupulous Henry held England in the leash of utter terrorism. "As the royal policy disclosed itself, as the Monarchy trampled under foot the tradition and reverence of ages gone by, as its figure rose bare and terrible out of the wreck of old institutions, England simply held her breath. It is only through the stray depositions of royal spies that we catch a glimpse of the wrath and hate which lay seething under this silence of the people. For the silence was a silence of terror. Before Cromwell's rise and after his fall from power, the reign of Henry the Eighth witnessed no more than the common tyranny and bloodshed of the time. But the years of Cromwell's administration form the one period in our history which deserves the name that men have given to the rule of Robespierre. It was the English Terror. . . . All trust in the older bulwarks of liberty was destroyed by a policy as daring as it was unscrupulous. The noblest

institutions were degraded into instruments of terror. . . . Cromwell had at last reached his aim. England lay panic-stricken at the feet of the 'low-born knave' as the nobles called him, who represented the omnipotence of the crown." *

There were few of the temper of Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More, but for such as there were was reserved an identical fate; yet the people rose against the suppression of the monasteries as in no other instance where Henry's crimes were concerned. They knew their friends, and also they knew Henry, Cranmer, and Cromwell. The fate of the martyred Carthusian priors, Houghton, Webster, and Lawrence, who were hanged, drawn, and quartered, and of the nine monks of Charterhouse, who were slowly starved to death, was before them; yet in defence of the monasteries they started an uprising, led by Robert Aske, that threatened to send Henry's throne crashing to destruction had he not crushed it by solemn promises, which, the moment he had the formidable insurrection in hand, were promptly broken. Henry played his hand craftily and well; the nobles were of his own creation or subsidized by him, in either case utterly in his power; the episcopate he also

*Green: "A History of the English People."

had made his own. With incredible swiftness he crushed the rebellion, rooted out every vestige of monasticism, took over its almost incalculable wealth, and not only left the people helpless for a time and without leaders, but became possessed of a body of faithful nobles bribed by monastic lands and of a treasure chest adequate for the putting down of any revolt that might again occur. It was a great game in which men such as Henry VIII. and Thomas Crumwell could not lose.

We are sometimes tempted to find a certain justification for the king's course in the complete complaisance of the higher nobility, who, it must be confessed, backed him most heartily in all his schemes; but it was a very different nobility to that which had existed a century before. The Wars of the Roses had practically exterminated the families ancient in honour, and Henry was surrounded by a throng of new creations without blood and without traditions. His attitude toward them was quite different to that of his father: instead of bullying, he subsidized them, and one and all they soon saw that the only road to wealth and preferment lay through the sovereign's favour. In general they were rapacious, covetous, unprincipled, and irreligious; and they saw, as did the king, that the wealth

most easily obtainable was the wealth of precisely those men who were powerless to resist spoliation.

Such was the state of things when that extraordinary personality, Cardinal Wolsey, rose into supremacy. At the same time beneficent and baleful, "insatiable in his requisitions, but still more magnificent in his expense, of extensive capacity, but still more unbounded enterprise,"* "he was a minister of consummate address and commanding abilities, greedy of wealth and power and glory,"† and was responsible in his own person for the nature of that which followed, since in his service was bred that terrible tool, Thomas Crumwell, "the cloth carder," "Vice-Gerent and Vicar-General," "than whom none ever rose so rapidly and no one has left behind him a name covered with greater infamy and disgrace,"‡ and who, on the fall of Cardinal Wolsey, was taken over of the king to carry out a project suggested by the very actions of the cardinal himself.

Determined to emulate the great William of Wykeham, Wolsey bullied the helpless and hopeless Clement VII. into sanctioning his scheme

* Hume: "History of England."

† Lingard: "History of England."

‡ F. A. Gasquet, D.D.: "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries."

Fountains—John of Kent—Nine Altars.

for suppressing enough of the smaller monasteries to give him money for the founding of his "Cardinal's College" in Oxford; and the pecuniary results so excited the admiration of the king that, Wolsey once out of the way, he continued to develop and exploit the mine that promised so well.

It was, however, the bitter opposition of the orders to the divorce of Queen Katherine that first roused Henry's anger and, in the result, gave him his first taste of blood and plunder. Seven houses of Franciscan Observants refused to take the oath of allegiance to Anne Boleyn, and were promptly suppressed. The Carthusians of the London Charterhouse followed next, and then the king, with the invaluable aid of Crumwell, evolved his scheme for suppressing the smaller monasteries. To bring this about he directed Crumwell, then in full favour, to make a "visitation" of all the monasteries, through his chosen agents. The task was carried out to admiration: the "Vicar-General" chose four men in whom he could trust, creatures of his own and four of the most perfect knaves ever recorded in history, Doctors London, Layton, Legh, and Ap Rice, and sent them forth on their unsavoury errand. Fortunately their letters to their master have

been preserved, and a more shocking revelation of essential depravity is unimaginable. We know now the nature of these "visitors," for they have revealed it over their own hands and seals; and it is so unmitigated in its vileness that no man now would believe any one of them under oath. "It is not impossible that even such bad men may have told the truth in this matter, but the character of witnesses must always form an important element in estimating the value of their testimony, and the character of such obscene, profligate and perjured witnesses as Layton and London could not be worse." *

It is on their unsubstantiated statements that the lesser and finally the greater monasteries were condemned. "Condemned"? by whom? Not by the king, for he had determined to wipe them out before Crumwell's emissaries set foot on their journey: by the Lords? There was once a tradition of a certain "Black Book" which was so awful in its revelations that when placed before the Lords it brought their pious condemnation. Yet for the existence of this "Black Book" there is no shadow of valid evidence, and we have every reason for believing that the Lords doomed the monasteries on the

* Blunt: "The Reformation of the Church of England."

easy word of the king that he had "knowledge that the premises be true": by the Commons? An historian, writing only some sixty years after the event and recording at least the popular belief as to the facts, states that when Henry heard that the Commons were recalcitrant in this particular affair he called them all to attend him and, after making them wait all day, came suddenly among them. "I hear (saith he) that my bill will not pass, but I will have it pass or I will have some of your heads": * by the people? "The Pilgrimage of Grace" and the risings in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire are the answer.

After all these centuries and in spite of the misrepresentations of certain historians, we have good ground for holding that the "comperta" of Crumwell's emissaries are little more than malignant lies, or at best scurrilous stories gathered from pothouse and hovel, and, as Green admits in his "History of the English People," "grossly exaggerated" at that. It is an actual matter of fact that every indictment against the monks and nuns of the period rests on the sole and totally unsubstantiated word of London, Legh, Layton, or Ap Rice, and no man would condemn a dog to-day on the oath of any one

* Sir Henry Spelman: "History of Sacrilege."

of these worthies. "A dean," says Blunt in speaking of London, "twice detected in immorality and put to open penance for it, and afterwards convicted of perjury, is not the stuff of which credible witnesses are made." *

During 1535–6 Henry's policy was to oppress the remaining monasteries into extinction, and his brutal methods would have been wholly successful had he not decided very wisely that more sudden and radical measures would give better returns in money. The results of the suppression of the smaller monasteries were vastly greater than even he had anticipated, and proved what a veritable Golconda lay under his hand. In the first assault three hundred and seventy-six houses had gone down. Sloane sets the amount of money really received for the buildings and treasure at the equivalent of about $6,000,000 to-day, which is perhaps too high, but is only a tithe of the extrinsic value. Usually in the case of a great abbey the bells and the lead from the roof were considered the only available assets, the former bringing about three dollars per pound in our money. What the intrinsic value of a group of conventual buildings might have been is shown from the fact that the lead from the roofs of Bury

* Blunt: "The Reformation of the Church of England."

Whitby Abbey

St. Edmunds was sold for the equivalent of $200,000.

The buildings themselves, those marvels of majestic architecture, were considered of no marketable value; thus, at the destruction of Bath Abbey the dorter was sold for $600, the fratry for $360, the cloisters for $480, while all the buildings of Athelney Abbey were sold for $1,200. In many cases the people saved the buildings they loved by purchasing them from the king's agents, and the prices they paid are significant: Romsey, a majestic edifice of cathedral proportions, was bought for $6,000, Malvern $1,200, and St. Albans, now the cathedral, for $24,000. The examples I have quoted are from among the greater abbeys suppressed a year or two later, but they serve as an indication of the disparity between the actual value of the property and the prices received.

Of course the king's coffers received only a small proportion of the proceeds; at least three fourths went into the hands of his agents, yet in Lincolnshire alone, in the first six months of the suppression of the lesser monasteries, John Freeman, the royal receiver, admitted to having collected from the sale of buildings and their contents $375,000, probably about one tenth the real value. This came from thirty-seven

houses, the annual rent rolls of which aggregated $180,000. As a result of this first suppression, three hundred and seventy-six houses were extinguished with an annual rent roll of $1,800,000, a real value for lands and buildings of perhaps $40,000,000. More than two thousand monks and nuns were dispossessed and distributed among other houses, and eight thousand dependents were reduced to beggary.

Halted by the popular insurrections all over the north of England, Henry turned for a time to "dissolution by attainder," a deft process which invariably gave good results. The method was this: the agents of the king appeared before a given abbey and demanded its immediate surrender; if the demand was complied with, the abbot and prior were given fat livings, the monks pensioned; if it was refused, the king at once charged the abbot with high treason before Parliament, which, as it was then constituted, was safely to be counted on to declare the accused guilty *without trial*. Thereupon the abbot was hanged, drawn, and quartered, the monks were expelled without pensions, and the entire property of the abbey came to the king. In this way fell the three great mitred abbeys of Glastonbury, Reading, and Colchester, among the most glorious and powerful, as well as

stainless in reputation, of the Benedictine houses.

Shortly before this the priories and nunneries had been wiped out, and now, Aske and the Yorkshire abbots having been killed and that danger well passed, Henry, whose financial needs were increasing every day, struck finally at the last of the greater houses, and with incredible swiftness swept the whole institution into final ruin. For this action there was no excuse, except that they were a constant thorn in the king's flesh through their former opposition (now largely extinguished by terrorism) to his entire career, political, religious, and domestic, and that he preferred to have their property for his own personal use. Even Crumwell's agents had rashly admitted, at the time of the introduction of the bill in Parliament for the suppression of the monasteries with an annual income of $12,000 or less, that "in divers and great solemn monasteries of this realm, thanks be to God, religion is right well kept and observed." This fact, for fact it was, as proved by eixsting documents, was of no avail. The people could stand no further taxation and Henry needed such vast sums for the subsidizing of the nobles, the maintenance of his international system of bribery and espionage, and, above all, for his own some-

what elaborate household, that there was nothing else to be done. When funds cannot be obtained legally, they must be acquired otherwise: the people had little left worth taking; the nobles would not submit to taxation; the monks, who possessed very concrete and easily convertible property, could not resist, and therefore suffered.

The narrative of the Great Suppression cannot be reduced to a few words. The facts have been gathered together and put in the most concise form by Doctor Gasquet, to whose "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries" any one may go who cares for details. The destruction was carried out with all brutality and surrounded by every conceivable degree of horror, outrage, and butchery. When the black cloud lifted there were not any monks, nuns, and friars, nor any abbeys, priories, or convents remaining in England. Broken and dishonoured ruins of majestic wonders of art blasted every county; hundreds of thousands of acres of land had been distributed amongst the king's upstart nobility; and ten thousand religious of both sexes had been dispossessed. One half this number had received pensions, ample it is true in the case of abbots, adequate for priors, but, so far as monks and nuns were concerned, just enough on which

to starve; the other five thousand had either been killed or turned out to die in poverty. In addition upwards of eighty thousand dependents, men, women, and children, had been reduced in a day to absolute beggary: for them was neither consideration nor mercy.

The events that had taken place had been of some benefit to the king. He had removed forever the only source of dangerous opposition to his policies, while from the sale of monastic lands he had received about $52,000,000, probably one third its market value. The buildings, vestments, sacred vessels, bells, books, and works of art had brought in $1,500,000, perhaps one fifth the money actually collected by the receivers. The intrinsic value cannot be computed, but to restore the ruined abbeys again to their former estate would require at least $250,000,000. The total income of the confiscated estates during the ten years from 1536 to 1547 had been $25,000,000. This sum represented a very small part of the real and potential revenue, which under the monks themselves had been about $11,000,000 per year; yet the unbroken testimony is that the secular landlords were incalculably more oppressive and greedy than the monks had been. From April, 1536, to Michaelmas, 1547, the King's treasury received

£1,338,442, 9*s*, 2½*d*, equal to rather more than $70,000,000 of our money.

We may say then that the destruction of the English monasteries resulted in unnumbered murders; the reduction to beggary of one hundred thousand men, women, and children; the total destruction of about $200,000,000 worth of property; the alienation to those who had no claim to it whatever of estates, the rentable value of which was about $11,000,000 per year; the temporary extinction of education, mercy, and public charity; the abolition in great sections of territory and for several millions of people of the services and ministrations of religion; the eternal loss of works of art of immeasurable value; and, as the event proved, "The creation of a large class of poor to whose poverty was attached the stigma of crime; the division of class from class, the rich mounting up to place and power, the poor sinking to lower depths: destruction of custom as a check upon the exactions of landlords: the loss by the poor of those foundations at schools and universities intended for their children, and the passing away of ecclesiastical titles into the hands of lay owners."*

I have dealt above with the facts of the Sup-

*F. A. Gasquet, D.D.: "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries."

pression, not with the totally different question as to whether or no monasticism had outlived its usefulness in England and had to fall if the Church were to become independent once more and the English people go on unhampered in their development. Here there is a chance for differences of opinion; but I believe there is no such opportunity when it comes to a consideration of monastic morals during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the motives behind the Suppression, and the methods pursued in bringing this about.

The only ground we have for assuming corruption and immorality on the part of the religious of the several orders is the fact that they were human and therefore fallible. That among some ten thousand men and women there must have been instances of failure to live up to their vows is perfectly certain; that during the long career of monasticism in England there were innumerable instances of quarrelling, litigation, jealousy, oppression, individual immorality, is equally true. No one has ever claimed for religious exemption from human weaknesses; there were bad abbots, priors, and monks, as there were bad bishops and priests, and bad princes, nobles, and commons. But there is no evidence whatever to prove that the cloister

fostered wickedness of any kind, or that its occupants were not living after a higher standard than the secular priesthood and those to whom they ministered. On the other hand, while we find evidence of serious troubles, particularly in the fourteenth century, these are curiously lacking in the latter half of the fifteenth century and the first years of that which followed, while the proofs of corruption and failure among the secular priesthood are too complete to be denied, even Roman apologists admitting the fact with such cheerfulness as is possible.

Was this destruction justifiable on the broader grounds of national policy? Had the monasteries become indeed "fetters on the advancement of freedom, education and true religion"? Was it necessary that they should fall in order that English civilization might advance another step in its development? Conceivably, yes, and also conceivably, no. It is a question that I submit is unanswerable. After a period of very terrible chaos England *did* advance, and it is equally true that the consensus of opinion is that the Church could not have re-established her independence of Rome except after the destruction of monasticism. It is easy to argue as to what might have happened if Oliver Cromwell had really been allowed to

emigrate from England in the early days of King Charles's reign, if Washington had refused to take command of the Continental army, if Blücher had not come up in time at Waterloo, if Lincoln had not been assassinated; but the arguments lead nowhere. In the same way one might easily prove that the advancement of civilization in England and the vigorous development of her national Church might have been far more healthful, normal, and sane, with equally satisfactory results, had the monasteries been reformed, not suppressed. The argument is valueless, for it is not susceptible of proof. The fact remains that by reason of, or in spite of, this suppression England and the Church *did* go on to better things; but is there no ground for holding that this was due to a destiny no act of man could turn aside?

One thing however, is sure: the suppression of the monasteries was conceived and encompassed by two men who personally cared nothing for the abstract idea of the progressive development of national civilization, for the administrative independence of the Church, for the principle of doctrinal purification alleged by the continental reformers, or for the rectification of public morals. Henry determined to destroy monasticism for the same reason that influ-

enced him to destroy parliamentary government: because it was a fetter on his absolute will as king; because it was in the beginning bitterly opposed to his break with Rome, his proclamation of himself as supreme head on earth of the Church in England, and his divorce of Queen Katherine; finally, because he was in need of vast sums of money and could get them nowhere else. I am not writing an apology for monasticism as an institution; it is possible it was well for England that it should be shorn of its enormous power, and even for a space extinguished. I do hold, however, that, if Henry and Crumwell were fighting the battle of developing civilization, it was with entire unconsciousness of the part they were playing, that their only conscious motives were base and singularly sordid, that the methods they followed were such as to merit nothing but unsparing denunciation, and that the immediate results were most lamentable both for the Nation and for the Church.

Glastonbury: The South Choir Aisle.

The Ruined Abbeys of Great Britain

TO those who have ever set foot in the magical Island of Avalon, the word means immeasurable things, and to its few and desecrated ruins one turns first among all the abbeys of England. From every standpoint it demands primary honour and consideration, not only as the most famous and glorious of the houses of the earliest and greatest order of monks, nor yet as the ground hallowed by the feet of the holiest and highest of bishops, priests, and kings, but as in very deed the unquestioned site of the first Christian church in Britain.

Glastonbury lies far from the great contemporary centres of life, away from the common routes of travel, sequestered among the low and softly rounded hills of Somerset.

Casual and infrequent trains crawl thence in leisurely fashion from the cathedral city of Wells, but the trains, though useful, are an impertinence in a way, and seem to feel this in their halting half-heartedness. Even now, though few holy places in England have suffered more, and few have actually so little to show in living reminder of a deathless past, one cannot avoid the instinctive feeling that the approach should be pilgrim fashion and on foot, even as the founders of this first Christian community in Britain came to "a certain Royal Island, of old called Glastonbury," the mystical land of Avalon:

"Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crowned with summer seas."

Long before arrival, and from whichever point one may approach, across the swelling downs and pastures and flowery gardens, through dips in the low-lying hills, Glastonbury Tor lifts, ominous and insistent; a sudden steep hill like a volcanic cone, crowned with the gaunt spike of a lonely tower, from the base of which every vestige of church has fallen away. There is something foreboding in this weird, tower-topped pyramid: it forces itself on the mind with curious insistence, and well it may, for, on a certain day in November, 1539, the last

act in a ghastly tragedy wore to its bloody close on its crest, and there the curtain fell forever on a mighty drama of human life. Apart from the Tor, there is only gentleness and peace now to be seen in the land that lies about the island the Saxons called Ynis-wytren: a softer and sweeter country one could not call up in fancy; rich, green, fertile, breathed over by soft winds and bland in summer sun. And not so many years ago, the town itself was of a piece with the land — old, grey, drowsy, with fragments here and there of buildings that dated from the time when the vanished abbey was a place of pious pilgrimage, and tens of thousands of men and women from all over England gathered here to do honour to the memory of saints and martyrs and kings, long dead, but, while the monks remained, unforgotten. Of late, however, revolution has begun: roads are being widened, straightened, and blocks of hideous brick tenements are lining the way where once unnumbered kings and queens and nobles, with flaunting retinues, rode up to pay homage before the "Sapphire Shrine" and the graves of St. Joseph of Arimathea, St. Patrick and St. Dunstan, King Arthur and Guinevere, his queen.

We may accept or reject the narrative of old

William of Malmesbury: the fashion of doubt has cast discredit on legend, record, and history, but his was the faithful belief of all men for a thousand years, and in testimony thereof the Island of Avalon with its church of incredible glory became the holiest spot in all England and, shamed and discredited, so it remains to-day. Pious legends we may reject, if such is the bent of our minds, but whether or no we believe that St. Joseph of Arimathea led hither his band of the Disciples: whether we hold or discard the tradition that St. Patrick first organized the scattered hermits of Avalon into a semblance of order, or that Arthur and Guinevere lay here in a single grave, enough and more than enough remains, against which even modern criticism is powerless, to make this the holiest land in all Great Britain.

The tradition of the founding of the abbey by St. Philip the Apostle and his twelve disciples, amongst whom was St. Joseph of Arimathea, was held from the earliest times until the reign of Henry VIII.; it is perfectly credible and also perfectly unprovable; the question is one solely of belief. The tale of the coming of the footsore pilgrims, bearing the Holy Grail, their rest on Wearyall hill, the genesis of the holy thorn from Joseph's staff, the building of

the wattle church and its consecration — these are all such pious tales as may have grown either from nothing or from everything; they bear the mark of monks' fables, and equally they bear the mark of impeccable tradition. Take or leave them, there is still the fact that here was built, in all human probability, the first Christian church in Britain. And the list of those who lived within the abbey walls or were buried in the consecrated ground of their enclosure is large enough, even without the addition of those whom history, arbiter of the legendary, stigmatizes as such. St. Dunstan, St. Gildas, St. David, St. Aidan, the Venerable Bede, King Coel the father of St. Helena, King Edmund "the Magnificent," King Edgar, King Edmund "Ironsides," not to name martyrs, confessors, virgins, bishops, abbots, kings, princes, nobles, the list of whose names would run into hundreds. For a thousand years Glastonbury was "held in such Veneration that it was called a Second Rome, for Sanctity." From all over England and Europe the great dead were brought here for sepulture, and the soil was sent away in vast quantities, even as from Palestine itself. In the fifteenth century so clamorous were the faithful for burial space within the walls, that the monks were constrained

to excavate a crypt beneath the chapel of St. Mary; and the lead of the crowded coffins there, less than an hundred years later, formed part of the spoil of the destroyers. Sacred the place was and is, beyond measure or computation. For nearly four centuries it has been subject to hideous desecration, and is now: the last time I was there, a few months ago, hundreds of freshly shorn sheep were herded within the narrow enclosure, grinding the long grass down into muck and mire, climbing over the shattered walls, snatching at the clinging ivy, filling the air with a deafening bedlam of foolish cries. The filth under foot was indescribable. At another time the sheep were absent, but several horses were tethered within the nave and aisles, and in the very Sanctuary itself a miserable calf, tied to a stake, fell in a fit and kicked out its life where once stood the tomb of King Arthur and his queen.

Shall we add these names to the list of those who have rendered the word immortal? We are told there is no sure proof that either has ever lived. It may be so: the matter is unimportant, for the names of Arthur and Guinevere, Merlin and Mordred, Launcelot, Galahad, and Elaine have become so interwoven with the history of the world that their actual existence

Glastonbury. The Ruins from the East.

in time and space is of little moment: they stand for entities, persistent and operative, that remain forever. Actualities or emanations, they are now facts, and no criticism can make them else. The narrative of the finding of the bodies of Arthur and Guinevere during the abbacy of Henry de Soliaco, in the year 1191, goes far to prove not only its own truth, but the material fact of real existence as well: it is concise, detailed, convincing, full of internal evidences of perfect veracity; if false, it is a masterpiece of circumstantial evidence quite unimaginable of the twelfth century. Giraldus Cambrensis, declaring himself an eye-witness, sets down the facts simply and in the most matter-of-fact way. Between the two mysterious pyramids beside the chapel of the Blessed Virgin, seven feet below the surface, was found a large flat stone, in the under side of which was set a rude leaden cross, which, on being removed, revealed on its inner and unexposed surface the roughly fashioned inscription, "Hic jacet sepultus inclitus Rex Arthurius in Insula Avalonia." Nine feet below this lay an huge coffin of hollowed oak, wherein were found two cavities, the larger containing a man's bones of enormous size, the skull bearing ten sword wounds, the smaller the bones of a woman and a great tress of golden

hair, that on exposure to the air crumbled into dust. "The Abbat and Convent receiving their Remains with great joy, translated them to the great Church, placing the King's Body by itself at the upper Part of a noble Tomb, divided into two Parts, and the Queen at the Feet, in the Choir before the High Altar, where they rest in magnificent Manner 'til this Day."

It is impossible to step within the shrunken precincts without submitting to the spell they weave. Here facts fall and dissolve: the instant one stands in the shadow of these mighty crags of riven masonry, all the inheritance of a thousand years comes back, and we know that here also walked St. Joseph of Arimathea, St. Patrick, King Arthur and his queen, and that beneath the vanished vaults once rested the Holy Grail.

For there is no other place exactly like Glastonbury. Of the abbeys, Fountains and Netley and Tintern, and Whitby and Melrose are far more beautiful in the abstract, but in the Island of Avalon we get back at the heart of things, come close in touch with the primal life of our race and Church. It should be warded by impenetrable walls and guarded like a sanctuary. None should enter except in reverence, and as on a pious pilgrimage; every stone should be cherished and preserved, and on certain days,

within the roofless chapel and where once stood the sumptuous choir, the Holy Sacrifice should be offered with every accompaniment of devotion and expiation and the sacred spot hallowed again, instead of being given over, as now, to barnyard cattle and garrulous "trippers."

Glastonbury, the site of the first Christian church in Britain and of the first organized religious life, was the most honoured and glorious of all the Benedictine monasteries, admitting as rivals only St. Albans, St. Edmundsbury, Westminster and Canterbury. As it was the most famous, so was it the richest, with an annual revenue from its lands of about one hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars. The church was the largest in Great Britain and in many ways the noblest. Princely in its estate, it was princely in its beneficence and hospitality: a thousand men were dependent on it for the maintenance of their families, no poor ever came to its doors and went away hungry: a large number of men was constantly employed in its cloisters illuminating missals and breviaries, and transcribing not only works of theology and devotion, but of classical and general literature. The library was the greatest in all England, and when Leland visited it, in the last days of the last abbot, he bears witness he was so over-

whelmed with awe at the sight of such vast treasures of antiquity that for a time he dared not enter. To Henry and Cromwell a treasure-house such as this was of no value: we read in the official accounts time after time how certain "old bookes in the choir" of some proud monastery were sold for 6*d* or 8*d* ($1.20 or $1.60).* John Bale, a contemporary, has recorded the sale of "two noble libraries for forty shillings price" ($100). These books were illuminated quartos and folios on vellum and parchment, bound in richly tooled skin and mounted with silver and gold: they were mostly bought by grocers and soap-sellers to be used as wrappings, or, in the case of books printed on paper, for kindling fires. Many ship-loads were sent out of the country to Continental book-binders, and this fact may give some idea of the immense number of books destroyed, as well as that other which shows that the thrifty soul who bought the "two noble libraries" for $100 used the priceless tomes "instead of gray paper by the space of more than these ten years, and yet he hath store enough for as many years to come." As a result of this singular barbarism, we know very little either of the various English liturgical "uses," or the quite remark-

*Note. — The purchasing power of a pound sterling was, in the sixteenth century, from ten to twelve times what it is now. — Author.

Glastonbury—St. John's Tower, from the Ruins.

able school of national religious music. More than two hundred and fifty thousand Missals, Ordinals, Antiphonals and Graduals were thus destroyed, and the loss liturgically, archæologically, and artistically is irreparable.*

Of the worldly estate of Glastonbury we find an absorbing account in the Chronicles of William of Malmesbury: here we read how Michael, the forty-sixth abbot, dying in 1253, left the abbey with 892 oxen, 60 bullocks, 233 cows, 6,717 sheep, and 327 swine, to quote only a few items: how during the abbacy of Adam Sodbury, fifty-third in the succession, Edward III. and Queen Philippa, with a vast retinue of nobles, were magnificently entertained at an expense to the monastery of more than $80,000; and how one after the other, fifty-nine in all, the abbots bought land, and extended and embellished the enormous church, adding chapels, altars, statues, sacred vessels and vestments until the mere enumeration is like a tale from the "Arabian Nights." Walter Taunton, for instance, the fifty-second abbot, "made the Pulpit in the Church, with ten Images, the Crucifix, Mary and John. He also gave to the Treasury the underwritten Ornaments; *viz.*, ten embroidered copes, the first whereof, being the

* See Maskell's "Monumenta Ritualia."

richest, contains the history of Christ's Passion, the ground being Gold, and of a Jasper Colour," etc.; also he gave, among other things, "three embroidered suits," two chasubles, "five pair of vestments," "ten rich embroidered Antependiums with a pulpit cloth," two carpets, two silver candlesticks, silver basons, dishes, porringers, and spoons, and many books, including "the new Digest of the Civil Law, with Clasps." What became of this marvellous store is indicated by a contemporary chronicler. "Many private men's parlours were hung with altar-cloths, their tables and beds covered with copes, . . . many made carrousing cups of the sacred chalices. . . . It was a sorry house, and not worth the naming, which had not somewhat of this furniture in it, though it were only a pair of large cushions made of a cope or altar-cloth."*

Such was the Abbey of St. Mary in Glastonbury, the first and greatest house of the oldest and most famous monastic order. First in England in point of time, the Benedictines maintained their supremacy until the end. The most noble of all the abbeys were theirs: Glastonbury, St. Edmundsbury, St. Mary's, York. Of the houses of lesser importance, St. Albans, Gloucester, Peterborough, Westminster (for a

*Heylin: "Ecclesia Restaurata."

brief period), Durham, Ely, Norwich, Rochester, Worcester, Winchester, Exeter, and Bath became secular cathedrals, but none, not even Gloucester or Westminster, was to be compared in solemn and perfect architecture with some of those that have passed away forever, and chiefest of these was Glastonbury.

Of St. Edmundsbury, St. Augustine of Canterbury, Battle Abbey and Evesham, not one stone of the churches themselves remains upon another, and there is nothing to tear our hearts with visions of an architectural glory that is gone forever. One could almost wish that the same fate had befallen Glastonbury, and that a green field lay wide and undefiled over the place of its sepulture. As it is, there is just enough, and that in so shameful case, to fill one with regret and insatiable desire. The unroofed and dishonoured chapel of the Blessed Virgin, the fragment of aisle wall, the crumbling stones of the choir, above all the two Titan piers of the chancel arch, these are so faultless in their proportions, so wonderful in style, so marvellous in workmanship, that to the architect they are maddening almost beyond endurance.

Previous to the great fire of 1184, which destroyed the entire monastery, including the little and most sacred First Church, of St. Joseph

of Arimathea, many churches had risen eastward of the *Vetusta Ecclesia*, one having been built by Ine, King of the West Saxons; another by St. Dunstan; a third by Turstan, the first of the Norman abbots, in 1082. This latter was unfinished at the time Herlewin came to the chair, and believing the plan insufficiently magnificent, he swept it away and began a much grander edifice in the year 1101. Abbot Siegfried, his successor, reigned but six years, and was followed by Henry of Blois, a monk of Cluny, of the blood royal, and withal "a Man renouned for much Literature and adorned with commendable Behaviour. Through his Industry the Church of Glastonbury obtained so many Advantages that his Memory will therefore deservedly flourish in the same forever." He rebuilt all the monastery except the two churches, and enriched the treasury with numberless books, sacred vessels, and vestments. During his abbacy the marvellous "Sapphire Altar," given by St. David of Wales and lost since the Danish invasion, when it was hidden for safe-keeping, was recovered and "Magnificently adorned with Gold, Silver and precious Stones, as it is to be seen to this Day."

On the death of Henry, the golden days were succeeded by a period of storm. Between the

Glastonbury. The West Door of the Great Church.

Glastonbury. A Transept Chapel.

Bishop of Bath and King Henry II., the abbey suffered grievously, and as a crowning calamity came the fire of 1184, which swept everything away. Then, "King Henry, taking Compassion on the Monks," charged Ralph, his chamberlain, to administer the abbey, and rebuild it on the most splendid scale, which the worthy Ralph, who appears to have been a man of singularly noble character, as well as a great architect, forthwith proceeded to do. Practically all that remains is his work. So well did he acquit himself of his task, that no further architectural additions were necessary for several centuries, though kings and abbots continued to load the monastery with books, ornaments, and vestments until it was richer than ever before. In 1322, however, Adam Sodbury became abbot, and a new epoch opened that continued without abatement until the end. Adam was a princely patron of art; he "adorned the High Altar with a large Image of the Mother of God, and a Tabernacle of notable Workmanship." Also he erected other altars and chapels, added many statues and shrines to the whole church, and finally rebuilt the vault of the entire nave, "and curiously adorned it with pictures." His gifts of vestments, sacred vessels, and relics were enormous: among them we read of "a Blue

Cope, with several Beasts wove in it with Gold, and curiously embroidered with silver butterflies," of chasubles of "red Satin embroidered with several histories of Saints," of others covered with embroidered and jewelled coats of arms, and even of one of "Green Silk with Finny Fishes and Gold Birds"! Walter Monington, who succeeded him in 1341, added two bays to the choir, the walls of which he raised, and roofed the whole, probably with some form of fan-vaulting: he also built the great retro-choir with its five altars. John Chinnock, his successor in 1374, continued the great work and rebuilt the cloisters, dormitory, and fratry, and extended and enriched the refectory and chapter house. Richard Beere, who succeeded to the abbacy in 1495, again took up the labour of "gilding refined gold," happily ignorant of the fact that before his plans could be carried out the whole fabric would be hurled into fragments by gunpowder, the graves of saints and kings desecrated, the lands given over to the destroyers, and his immediate successor, the last Abbot of Glastonbury, hanged, drawn, and quartered, like the veriest felon of the Kingdom. Ignorant of the black fate then looming large, he built chapels and altars of infinite richness, founded a new home for aged

women, and — note the pathos of this — fearing for the stability of his adored church, strengthened and reinforced it in many places, that it might last for yet other centuries. His labour was lost: the great church would have stood well for at least the twenty years that yet remained of its life.

Richard Whiting, successor of St. Joseph of Arimathea, St. Patrick and St. Dunstan, fifty-ninth and last of the abbots of Glastonbury, was an old man when, in 1524, he took his place at the head of the abbey as a preliminary to his martyrdom. No word was ever said against him: he was renowned for the frugality of his life, his wisdom, his gentleness, and his charity. He ruled an house of an hundred monks with three hundred lay associates, many of whom were of gentle blood. He supported a great number of students at the several universities, and the hospitality of the monastery was so great it is recorded that under him five hundred knights were frequently entertained at one time. The annual revenues of the monastery were, as I have said, not less than one hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars, and the store of plate and jewels almost fabulous. Henry needed all this; and on Friday, September 19, 1539, the royal "visitors," headed by the

infamous Layton, appeared at Glastonbury demanding the immediate surrender of everything into the king's hands. They searched the abbot's apartments and found there "a written book of arguments against the divorce of the King's majesty and the lady dowager, which we take it to be a great matter, as also divers pardons, copies of bulls, and the counterfeit life of Thomas Becket in print: but we could not find any letter that was material."*

These terrible evidences of "guilt" and the unrecorded answers to the inquisition of the "visitors" showed plainly enough the aged abbot's "cankered and traitorous mind against the King's majesty and his succession," and so they sent him, "being but a weak man and sickly," to the Tower. Two months later he was haled back to Wells to be "tried" before a jury made up of men who knew that the refusal of a verdict of "guilty" meant death to each and all of them. As a matter of fact, Cromwell has recorded in his own handwriting this note: "Item. The Abbot of Glaston to be tried at Glaston and executed there." In other words, the sentence preceded the trial. On the next day, November 15, 1539, Richard Whiting, Abbot of Glastonbury and peer of England,

* From the letter of the Commissioners to Crumwell.

Glastonbury—The Abbot's Kitchen.

old, feeble, and racked by his imprisonment in the Tower, was dragged on an hurdle to the top of Tor hill, where "he took his death very patiently." Then his head was stuck up over the monastery gate, and the quarters of his body were distributed between Wells, Bath, Ilchester, and Bridgewater. Glastonbury Abbey had ceased to exist.

So complete has been the destruction of this that was once the proudest church in all England, there is little to say of it architecturally. Apart from the awful grandeur of the choir piers, the forlorn ruins make little appeal to any except architects and archæologists. For them, there is no more important ruin in England, for it is couched in terms of the earliest transition from Norman to "Early English," and is of a severe and classical type hardly to be met with elsewhere. It is all Ralph's work, all but a few tottering panels high in the choir, that date from the time of Abbot Walter Monington. The chapel of the Blessed Virgin is earliest in date, and is round-arched throughout; but the carving of the original doorways, now blackened and crumbling from long continued and perfectly wilful bonfires, and that of the bosses and capitals of the interior, is more beautiful than anything that followed for

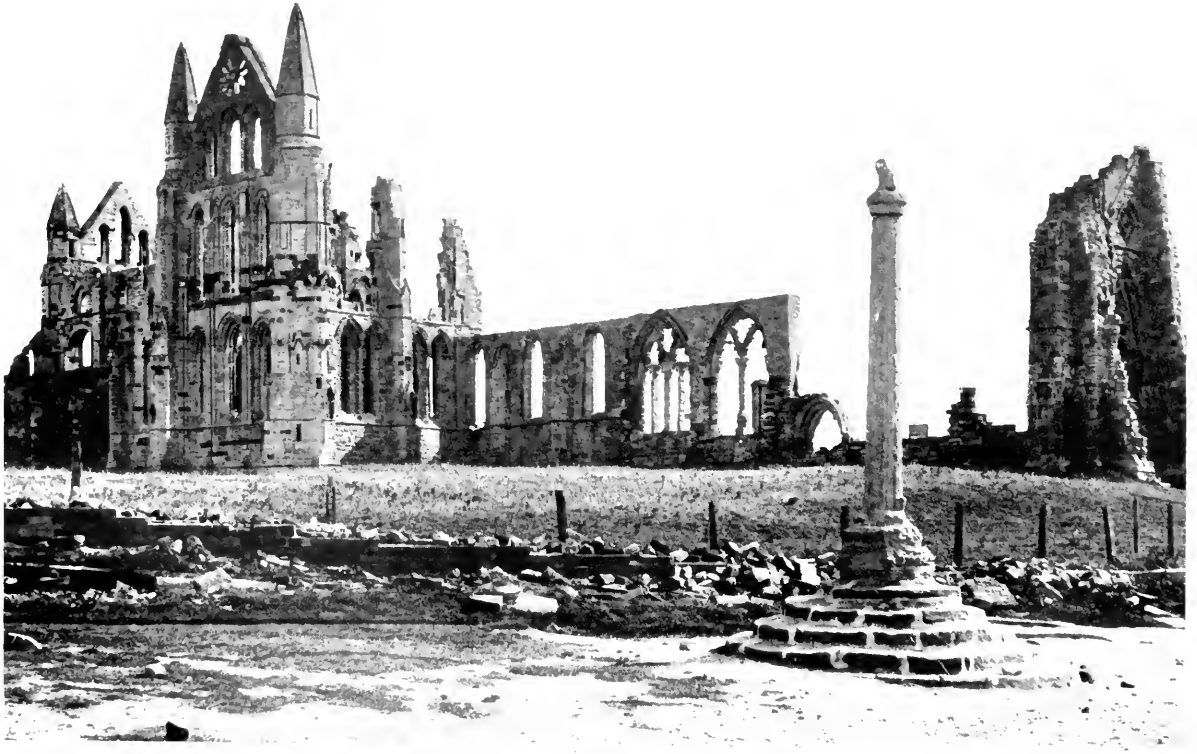
many years after. It is purely and exquisitely Gothic, fresh, crisp, full of the assurance and insight of perfectly competent artists. In the church itself, Ralph has adopted the pointed arch, half-heartedly at first, later with conviction. Everywhere, however, are fine, broad surfaces, masterly clusterings of verticals, grave restraint and supremely intelligent accentuation. The workmanship is of the highest type to be found in England in any period. Here, alone, all the powers of crescent art seem to have met together to strike out at once the type of perfect building. Elsewhere, and only too often, we find in England workmanship of the poorest, but here, as though the supreme holiness of the ground sanctified their labours, Ralph and his masons glorified God, not only through the beauty of art, but through faultless workmanship as well.

If I were asked to name the three most perfect examples of architecture that ever existed in England, I think I should say Glastonbury, St. Mary's, York, and Guisborough, and of these three only shattered fragments now remain. Had they been left us it would be impossible for critics to lift eyebrows at English Gothic, but they are practically gone: the destroyers did their work to the king's taste, and

in a few weeks the labour of generations, the proudest records of English glory, were hurled crashing into dust. At Glastonbury the exquisitely chiselled stones of the church itself, the lacy tracery of the chapels, shrines, and tombs, the shattered statues and shivered glass from the painted windows, were hauled away and used to build a common causeway across the marshes. It was indeed the end.

LINDISFARNE AND WHITBY

FROM the low-lying meadows of Somerset to the wild and wind-swept northern cliffs that frown on the German ocean is a long step, but here also are the beginnings of things to be; not so old by five hundred years, nor yet so meshed in legends and visions, and, if you like, fantastic fables, but venerable indeed, and deeply significant. Here, where the sudden cliffs break down into the ever-thundering sea and crabbed islands lift bravely out of tempestuous breakers, lashed by tumultuous winds and drenched by sea-spume and swirling fog, here were established the first outposts of the Catholic Faith in the North, in the year of our Lord 635, when Oswald, King of Northumbria, called St. Aidan from his monastery of St. Columba. Ten years before, Oswald's uncle, Eadwine, asking the hand of the daughter of the Christian King of Kent, had gained with his queen a Christian bishop and missionary in the person of St. Paulinus, one of the companions of St. Augustine, but



Whitby— From the site of the Monks' Graveyard.

sudden war had extinguished the flickering flame, and St. Aidan came to kindle it anew.

It was a wild and barbarous land and a wild and barbarous society into which he came. It is told that the first missionary bishop from Iona became discouraged within a year, and returned to his monastery, declaring the Northumbrians invincible in their heathenism. Up rose on the word a monk named Aidan, crying, "Was it their stubbornness, or your severity?" Whereupon the entire chapter acclaimed him as the true Bishop of Northumbria, which he became indeed, and a saint as well.

Barbarous the people undoubtedly were, but King Oswald was a man of splendid character, and the alliance of saint and king was invincible. Backed by royal favour and heartened by royal co-operation, Aidan, drawn by love of his island of Iona, sought out that other island of Lindisfarne lying close inshore, and established there his new monastery. Rome had been evangelizing the south; now the Celtic Church took hold on the north, and with equal success. Between the two, in all matters of government, there was a great gulf, and the difference went further even than this. The Celtic Church followed an older reckoning of Easter, and in other ways held by the standards of the East; but the

greatest difference lay in the entire mode of organization, for while in the south Rome was building up a superb and competent organism, masterly, logical, and orderly, a veritable *Civitas Dei*, St. Columba and the Celts had bred a great missionary Church, in which the bishops had become hardly more than channels through which the sacraments of ordination and confirmation were administered, without territorial jurisdiction or any very real administrative authority, while the whole power and purpose of the Church were concentrated in monastic orders; aggregations of zealous missionaries conquering through their consecrated enthusiasm. As the Rev. H. J. D. Astley has said in speaking of the Celtic Church: "It could arouse, but it could not maintain: it could win, but it could not govern. The combination of Celtic self-sacrifice and zeal with the discipline and culture of Rome was needed before the English Church could awake to the full responsibilities of her mission. The Celtic Church, tribal and monastic, was wanting in the sense of unity and Catholicity. Without the help of Rome there could never have been built up in England a great organic and cultured Church, able to hold its own among the storms of Christendom. Without the help of the saints of

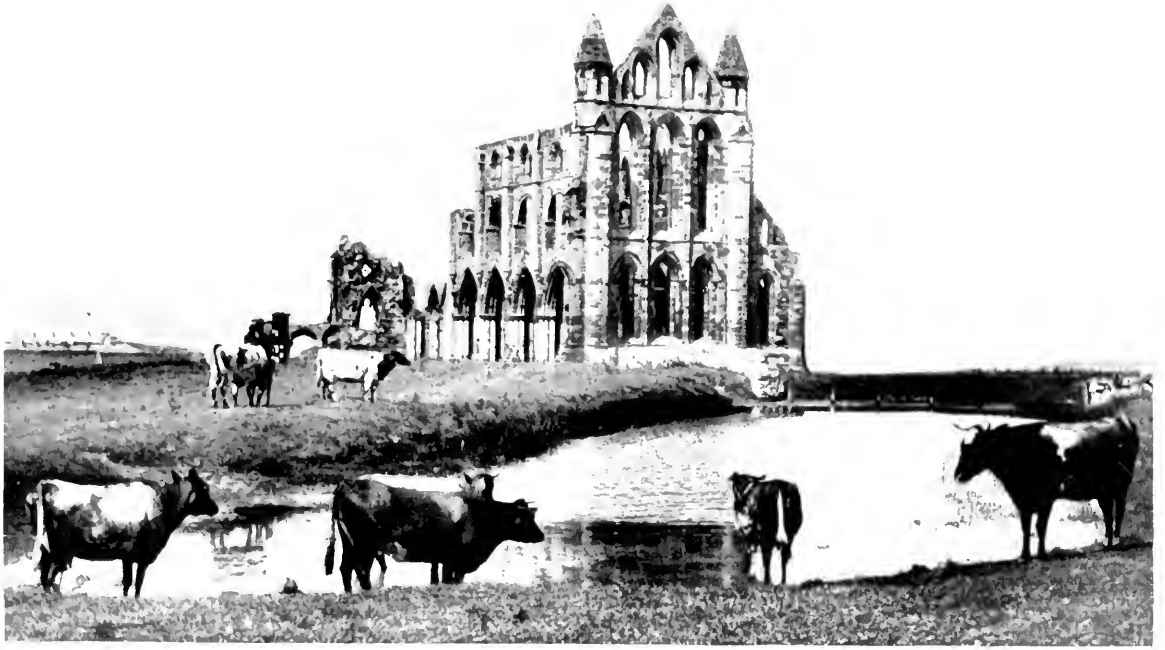
Iona and Lindisfarne, that Church would have been but a mechanism of bone and flesh, wanting the life-giving soul."

For thirty years St. Aidan and his successors ruled in the island monastery, winning the kingdom to Christianity; and then, in 664, came the epoch-marking Synod of Streonshalh, where the Celtic Church very wisely yielded to Roman law and order, and Abbot Colman, still unconvinced, retired with his friends and the relics of St. Aidan to Iona, to be succeeded five years later by St. Cuthbert, the glory of northern England. For an hundred years the monastery continued, revivified by the spirit of Cuthbert, and then, almost without warning, fell the storm of Danish invasion, and the Abbey of Lindisfarne was utterly extinguished, the body of St. Cuthbert being borne across the narrow waters by the fleeing monks in the glare of conflagration, to travel for seven years of pilgrimage until it found its final resting place in the great Abbey of Durham.

Of the Celtic monastery, not one stone remains: the solemn ruins are those of a Benedictine priory, raised in the eleventh century by a cell of monks from Whitby, who determined to repossess themselves of the island of Lindisfarne, now known as Holy Island, by

reason of the consecration given it by the lives of St. Aidan, St. Cuthbert, and the many martyrs who perished at the hands of the Viking invaders. For three centuries the land had lain desolate, yet it was redeemed at last. For three centuries and a half the same desolation has existed since the last prior, Thomas Sparke, with his handful of dispossessed brothers, went out into the world at the bidding of Henry VIII., who needed their pitiful yearly income of three thousand dollars. What has been once may be again, but when the new missionaries go back to restore in Holy Island the life of ordered consecration, they will not find it barren of every vestige of a great past, but dignified by noble ruins that have defied time and tide and the wrath of man.

For Lindisfarne, though comparatively small, is well preserved, as English abbeys go. It was sturdily built of strong red sandstone laboriously brought from the mainland, and in a fashion well calculated to withstand the shock of storm and the ferocity of the invader. One thing it was not proof against: the cupidity of spoilers, who rived the lead from the roofs, and the roofs from the walls, until all stood bare and desolate. Then followed century after century of neglect and petty pilfering. The great red walls have



Whitby Abbey from over the Monks' Fish Pond.

crumbled and fallen away, the tower has sunk into rubble, the vaults have vanished, but much has yet remained, while the incredible glories of Osney and Evesham and Beaulieu have become but a dim whisper, echoing out of oblivion.

Such as it is, Lindisfarne is strong English Norman after the type of Durham, in the pattern of which it was fashioned. Scott, a great romancist but a most inferior archæologist, says,

"In Saxon strength that Abbey frowned";

but there is no Saxon here, only honest Norman as the English workmen fancied it to be, and in their hands it was good indeed, for even at this beginning of things they were not content to copy the work of France, but from the first modified, translated, enriched, always making the first Norman and the following Gothic of whatever period distinctive and national. Lindisfarne is all very strong and frank and manly, an Englishman's abbey, and, except for its fifteenth century sanctuary, perfect and untouched, perhaps the most complete example of eleventh century architecture in England. It is little visited, for few trains stop at the station from which one must cross by boat, or, at low tide, fearsomely on foot, to the yellow island with its ruddy crown. Yet Holy Island is well worth

visiting, for it is a strange and barren spot, wind-swept and wet with spray and spume, though glowing in sunlight with a deep splendour that is full of melancholy. And the feet of St. Aidan and St. Cuthbert trod every inch of its surface, making it indeed "Holy Island" forever.

Lindisfarne, in spite of its grim architecture, is gentle and ingratiating, but Whitby, on the other hand, so near in fact, so intimately mingled in its history with Holy Island, is the very haunt of terror and dismay. And for this there seems no visible reason; it was never blasted by tragedy as was Glastonbury; it came to its end in comparative peace, being tamely surrendered to Crumwell by the last Abbot, Henry de Vall, in December, 1539. Unlike so many of its sister monasteries, it was left to a lingering death. The altars were destroyed, the roof torn away and sold, the plate, bells, and ornaments went into the coffers of the king, but the fabric of the church itself was never destroyed by man, though every trace of the conventual buildings was swept away, the materials going to the building of a singularly hideous house on the site of the abbot's lodgings. The great church, one of the many glories of mediæval England, was left to crumble slowly into dust. Perhaps this very fact is responsible for the atmosphere of

gloom that surrounds the gaunt ruins, the evidences of slow dissolution so terribly evident and even now in process of accomplishment. It is a wild and barren height, this cliff over the North Sea, and the racked walls, trembling under the fierce onslaughts of the wind, the whirl of sand dashed upward from the shingle, two hundred and fifty feet below, the screaming of seabirds as they slide down the wind through the blank lancets of clerestory and transepts, the black shadow under the single choir aisle, the heaped-up piles of shattered masonry, even the long and barren reaches of harsh moor stretching downward to the east, all combine to create an atmosphere of forlorn depression that is quite unusual among the abbeys, and quite unjustified by recorded history.

Perhaps the approach to Whitby, as we saw it, has something to do with it all, for, as one comes from Byland and Rievaulx, the line traverses the most abandoned and desolate area of country in all England, a ghastly black valley, gaunt and poisonous, the very land of Childe Roland's pilgrimage, and, as we saw it in a sinister twilight, quite enough to becloud the days for some time to come. Whitby itself is cheerful enough, a gay little town full of vivid personality, but even this was not enough to

wash out the memory of the "bog clay and rubble, sand and stark black dearth," through which we had travelled the night before. A strange place for a monastery, this breathless cliff in the lair of all the winds. Rievaulx was close behind in memory, a very glade in Paradise, type of the haunts of the shelter-loving monks, but this fierce hilltop, seemingly on the very brink of chaos, was a new note and unexpected.

Crossing the crowded little river, after threading narrow streets where "Whitby jet" is much in evidence, one mounts to the great ruins by breakneck steps, past the well-chiselled Celtic cross in memory of Caedmon, first of English poets and a monk of Whitby; past the stunted church of St. Mary, once a fine twelfth century building, now hideously desecrated and made ridiculous by seventeenth and nineteenth century abominations, and so to the desolate, rocky waste where a mutilated cross marks the once hallowed site of the monks' graveyard. From here the splintered, spire-like fragments tower gloomily against the sun, and the grimness is not lessened as one clambers through the breeched wall of the north aisle and emerges into the rough wilderness of heaped-up débris that fills the space of the demolished nave.

Whitby — Where the winds have gnawed at will

The effect is curious, for while much of the north side of the abbey remains, practically all on the south has been swept away, and over the tumbled hillocks of weed-grown stones one looks far out to the south along dreary reaches of desolate moor, empty of any life.

There is nothing in the architecture of Whitby Abbey that in itself breeds the unmistakable feeling of gloom and reserve that falls on one in the shadow of its disintegrating walls: quite the contrary, indeed, for it is all of the best period, a sunny and supple Early English, modulating into the best type of late Decorated. This is one of those many buildings the destruction of which has wrought such irreparable injury to the credit of English Gothic. Salisbury, except for its fine plan and well balanced mass, one of the most discreditable examples of early Gothic in Great Britain, remains almost intact, except for most curiously unintelligent "restoration"; but Whitby, almost faultless in its architectural style, and worthy to rank with St. Mary's, York, and Guisborough, has been suffered to crumble away in criminal neglect, when its preservation would have meant incalculable things to the history of English architecture.

The choir, which is earliest in time, is singu-

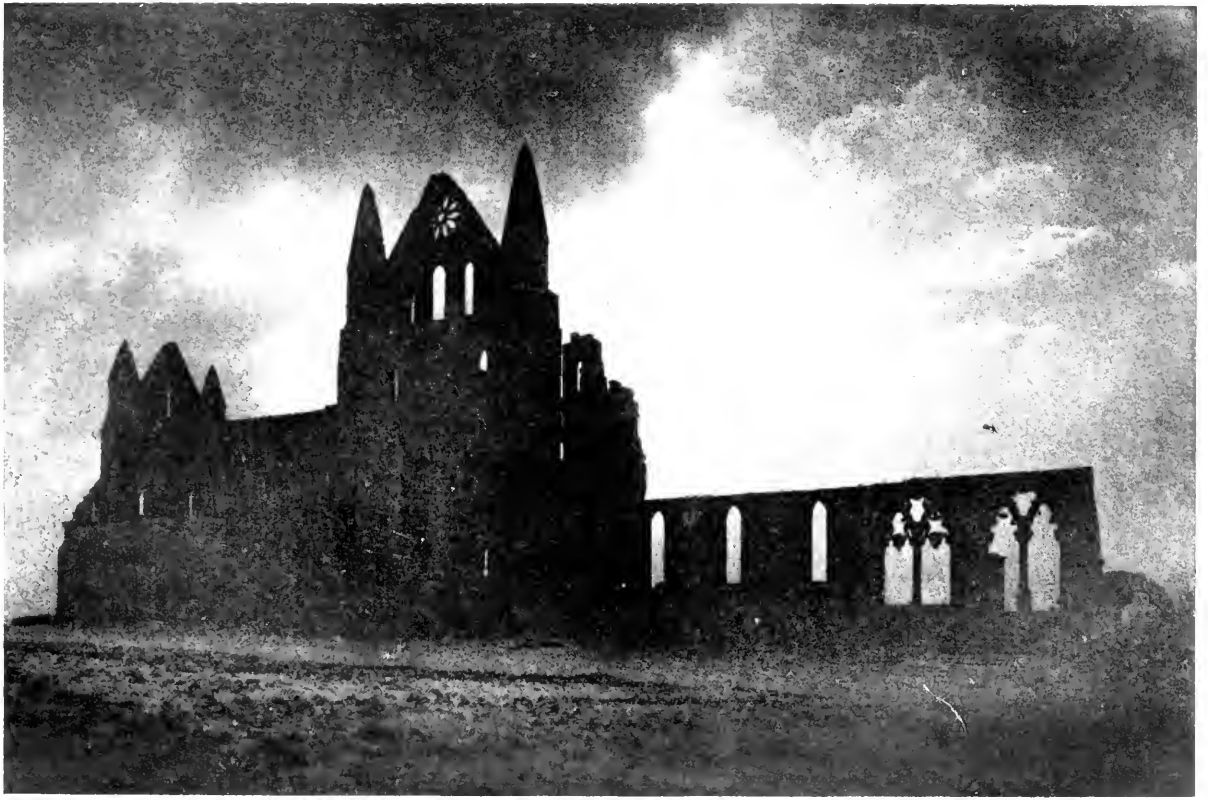
larly noble in its reserve and its classical proportions, but the north transept is finer yet, for it marks that perfect point when early English was just merging into Geometrical, and it preserves all the highly developed qualities of the former, without manifesting, as yet, any of the final defects of the latter. Everything is strong, sure, masterly; pure English, pure Gothic; work that might be unafraid to stand side by side with anything else that has been left us from mediæval times. What the nave may have been it is impossible to say definitely: at least it was supremely good; this much is proved by the weather-worn wall of the north aisle, with its tottering window tracery of an unusual and brilliantly beautiful type. No trace of the nave arcade or clerestory remains, but the great ridges of grass-grown débris may perhaps conceal enough to make possible a restoration, on paper at least, of the order, and one's fingers itch to dig into the big heaps and discover what they now conceal. Whitby and Rievaulx are almost alone among the greater abbeys in possessing these mountains of fallen masonry as yet untouched, and the temptation they inspire is almost irresistible.

Altogether, Whitby must have been a singularly consistent and united design, a church of

the best phases of the best periods, a witness to the essential greatness of English Gothic from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. We could have better spared many of the well-known cathedrals, now the objects of pious artistic pilgrimage. The story of the slow decay of this most noble church is particularly distressing, for it has perished by sheer neglect. From the Suppression until the middle of the seventeenth century the great fabric, together with the monastic buildings, remained practically intact, so far as their masonry was concerned: then, in those, the real "dark ages" of England, the latter were pulled down to form material for the existing mansion, and it is probable that at the same time the south wall of the choir aisle, and possibly the south transept, were destroyed, to the same end. In 1763 the south wall of the nave was blown down in a memorable tempest: in 1804 the north wall fell: in 1830 the great central tower collapsed in the midst of a dead calm, and nine years later a portion of the choir wall fell. About the same date the west front, with its vast Perpendicular window, crashed down on the west porch with its great flight of stately steps, and the ruin had become complete. Fifty years later, when little was left to save,

the owner of the abbey lands, Colonel Cholmley, set about staying the general wreck, and since then the shattered fabric has stood safe, though for how much longer it will stand one cannot say. The wind sweeps at will through every opening, and, laden with cutting sand, is steadily gnawing away the soft red stone; at any time all that remains may sink in final destruction, and the last vestiges of another national monument will be lost to England forever.

Whitby Abbey owes its existence in the first instance to Oswiu, brother of the royal saint, King Oswald, who was St. Aidan's protector. Penda, the heathen King of Mercia, who had slain King Oswald in battle, had matched himself against Oswiu, and the latter, on the eve of the great battle of Winwædfield, vowed that if God gave him victory, he would build a great monastery and as well consecrate his little daughter Elfleda to the religious life. So indeed it befell in the year 657, and the little princess was given into St. Hilda's hands. Simultaneously was begun the new foundation at Whitby, of old called Streonshalh, a great double monastery for both monks and nuns, and over both the lady Hilda was set as abbess. Under her wise direction, Whitby shortly became the great



Whitby The Ghost of Greatne

centre of learning and religion in the north country. Through her favour and sympathy, the clumsy "cowherd from whose lips flowed the first great English song," Caedmon, the monk, interpreted the Bible to the unlearned by means of wonderful poetic rhapsodies; St. Cuthbert and numberless famous abbots, monks, and chroniclers, became identified with its name, and at the great Synod of Streonshalh the step was taken that bound all Christian Britain under one law and one order. The issue was joined between Rome and the Celtic Church and definite action was imperative: to the Synod came, in the year 664, Abbot Colman in defence of the Celtic Church, Wilfrid of York to plead for Rome. St. Hilda, as befitted a disciple of the great Aidan, supported Colman ardently; but King Oswiu, who presided, gave judgment in favour of Rome, declaring that the authority of St. Peter was pre-eminent, and saying: "I will rather obey the porter of heaven, lest, when I reach its gates, he who has the keys in his keeping turn his back on me and there be none to open."

When St. Hilda died she was succeeded by the Princess Elfleda, who reigned over Whitby for thirty years, and was followed by others who permitted the great abbey to lose nothing of its

dignity and power. The Danes who sacked Lindisfarne in 793 stopped short of Whitby, but in 867 another invasion swept over the land and Whitby was as utterly destroyed as its sister monastery on Holy Island. The relics of St. Hilda were removed to Glastonbury, as those of St. Cuthbert had been translated to Durham, and for two hundred years the sea winds swept sheer across the blasted cliff, unbroken by buttress, wall, or tower, unmingled with the sound of any bell.

Ruined and desolate as was the forsaken abbey of St. Hilda, its influence was still operative, it would seem, for at last upon a time a soldier of William the Norman, Reinfred, "*miles strenuissimus*," passing by on some errand of his master, halted by the cliff of Streonshalh and, "*strenuissimus*" as he was, felt "pricked to the heart by the tokens of ruin and desolation," and to such good purpose that forthwith he renounced the profession of arms, embraced the religious life, and, after ten years of training at Evesham, issued forth, determined to carry out his cherished plan of establishing once more on the windy cliff a monastery after the order of St. Benedict. With him fared two brothers, Ealdwine, Prior of Winchcumbe, and Oswin; also a patient ass

to bear their scanty possessions. At Newcastle on Tyne the prior established himself, and Oswin remained in Jarrow, Reinfred alone coming at last to the site he had picked out for his future work.

All three of the hardy missionaries prospered exceedingly in their labours, and Reinfred especially was so zealous and enthusiastic that he presently gathered a great company about him, and, with the consent and favour of the house of Percy, entered into formal possession of the sacred places on Whitby cliff. William de Percy, proud, violent, yet, it would seem, passionately devout, and destined to end his days as a Crusader in the Holy Land, determined that the modest priory should grow into a mighty abbey, and his prayer was granted by the then king, Henry I. For many years the Norse Vikings continued their piratical raids, but the monks persisted, retiring to more sheltered spots when invasion threatened, returning always to build and rebuild, until at last, with the beginning of the fifteenth century, Whitby stood perfect and complete, a masterpiece of noble and exalted architecture.

The Order of St. Benedict, to which the monasteries of Glastonbury, Lindisfarne, and Whitby belonged, as well as the two hundred

and sixty other abbeys, priories, convents, and cells in England alone, was the most ancient, as it has been the most enduring, of all forms of western monachism. Its offshoots have been many, but offshoots they were, owing, all of them, primal inspiration to the immortal Rule that was given from Monte Cassino early in the sixth century. It would be impossible to overstate the magnitude of the debt the world owes to St. Benedict, and it is hard to believe that he was not the mouthpiece of Divine revelation. In the year of our Lord, 480, and on the day of St. Benedict's birth, chaos, black and unmitigated, lay over the world. "Confusion, corruption, despair, and death were everywhere; social dismemberment seemed complete. Authority, morals, laws, sciences, arts, religion herself, might have been supposed condemned to irremediable ruin. . . . The Church was worse than ever infected by heresy, schisms, and divisions which the obscure successors of St. Leo the Great in the Holy See endeavoured in vain to repress. . . . In temporal affairs the political edifice originated by Augustus — that monster assemblage of two hundred millions of human creatures 'of whom not a single individual was entitled to call himself free,'

Lindisfarne—The Nave, looking West.

Lindisfarne—The North Aisle.

was crumbling into dust under the blows of the Barbarians."*

In the year 494, a boy of fourteen, patrician by birth and through his mother the last scion of the Lords of Nursia, rose up and went away from the horrors of a crumbling world, to hide himself in the wilderness of the Anio valley. Naked and starving, he was befriended by a hermit called Romanus who gave him an old haircloth shirt and a cloak of the skins of wild beasts, and who for three years kept him alive by a daily dole of a loaf of bread. The cave of the boy-anchorite was quite inaccessible, so the old hermit and the young rigged up a cord so that the former might tie his loaf to it and, pulling it up, ring a little bell that gave word of the advent of the single daily meal. Little by little the shepherds, who, when they first saw him, took him to be a wild animal, spread reports of the sanctity of the new cenobite, and disciples flocked to him, drawn by curiosity, held by the holiness of Benedict's life and words. Day by day he fought the promptings of the flesh, rolling himself in brambles when the impulses were too powerful to yield to will alone, "until his body was all one wound." Master of himself at last, he consented to the

* Montalembert: "The Monks of the West."

task of mastering others, and became superior over a colony of monks near by. The experiment was a total failure, and Benedict returned to his cave only to be overwhelmed by an influx of disciples whom he finally organized into twelve monasteries under his own direction. Priests and laymen, nobles and peasants, Romans and Barbarians, crowded in upon him, all thirsting for the Bread of Life that he alone seemed able to give. He gave it indeed, but the price was obedience, chastity, and labour; one and all, the motley assemblage were set to work clearing the wilderness, redeeming the land, earning sustenance from the unwilling soil. He was bringing righteousness into an unrighteous world, he was establishing a new order of things, and the powers as then established resented the revolution. Hell rose up against him, all the powers of evil were leagued to encompass his fall; he realized this, took all the hatred of the world upon himself, and, to save his disciples, fled with a few chosen brothers far to the south into the higher mountains, and did not rest until he found himself in a forgotten region where Christianity was unknown and where the peasants still offered sacrifices to the heathen gods. It was Monte Cassino, the rock which at St. Benedict's blow was to yield the

fountain that, rising into an enormous flood, was to sweep over the length and breadth of Europe, bringing in a thousand years of Christian civilization.

Here for the fourteen years still remaining of this short and wonderful life, St. Benedict lived and worked, organizing the multitudes of disciples that flocked to him, turning the wilderness into a garden, converting the heathen inhabitants, spreading the Gospel of Christ, winning over the Gothic invaders of Italy and reconciling his own people to them, framing his immortal Rule and laying the foundations of Christian civilization. A layman to the day of his death, God gave him natural and supernatural powers unexampled since the days of the Apostles, and when "he died standing, murmuring a last prayer" at the age of sixty-three, he left to the world an heritage that guaranteed its glorious and righteous development for a thousand years.

Nothing marks the sublimity of the Rule more perfectly than its absolute reasonableness. Here are no excesses, no savage austerities, but rather serene edicts based on sound common-sense and a due regard to the potentialities of human nature. The Rule of St. Benedict might almost be called the first promulgation

of the fundamental law of Christian society. In the words of our Blessed Lord may be found the enunciation of the underlying spirit; the Rule of St. Benedict is the voicing of this spirit in detailed and definite terms.

The results were instantaneously visible. "Less than a century after the death of Benedict all that barbarism had won from civilization was reconquered; and more still, his children took in hand to carry the Gospel beyond those limits which had confined the first disciples of Christ. After Italy, Gaul, and Spain had been retaken from the enemy, Great Britain, Germany, and Scandinavia were in turn invaded, conquered, and incorporated into Christendom. The West was saved. A new empire was founded. A new world began."*

In the year 1316 a careful inquiry was made as to the history of the order, and it was found that even then there had been since its birth of men who had taken its vows, twenty-four Popes, two hundred cardinals, seven thousand archbishops, fifteen thousand bishops, the same number of abbots who had attained distinguished eminence, and upwards of forty thousand saints and holy men. In the year 1569, after the work of suppression had begun, it

* Montalembert: "The Monks of the West."

Lindisfarne. View of the Abbey from the West.

was claimed there were still thirty-seven thousand Benedictine monasteries containing at least a million monks.

Its first vast work accomplished and Christian civilization supreme at last throughout all Europe, Benedictinism fell away from its primal purity, but from its loins sprang one reformation after another, Benedict of Aniane in the eighth century, the Cluniacs in the tenth, the Carthusians and Augustinians in the eleventh, the Cistercians and Norbertines in the twelfth, Franciscans, Dominicans, and Carmelites in the thirteenth century. Each was a child of St. Benedict and all did his work, whatever the nomenclature and however changed in minor matters was the rule.

It is impossible to rehearse here the amazing narrative of the monastic epoch from St. Benedict to St. Francis of Assisi and St. Dominic, but it may be truly said that the mighty thousand years of mediævalism rest finally on the rock of Monte Cassino.

Of the annals of Whitby down to the time when a Henry consumed what another Henry had created, little of moment is on record. No scandals are alleged against it, even by Cromwell's choice aggregation of "visitors." No tragedy of blood and violence accompanies its

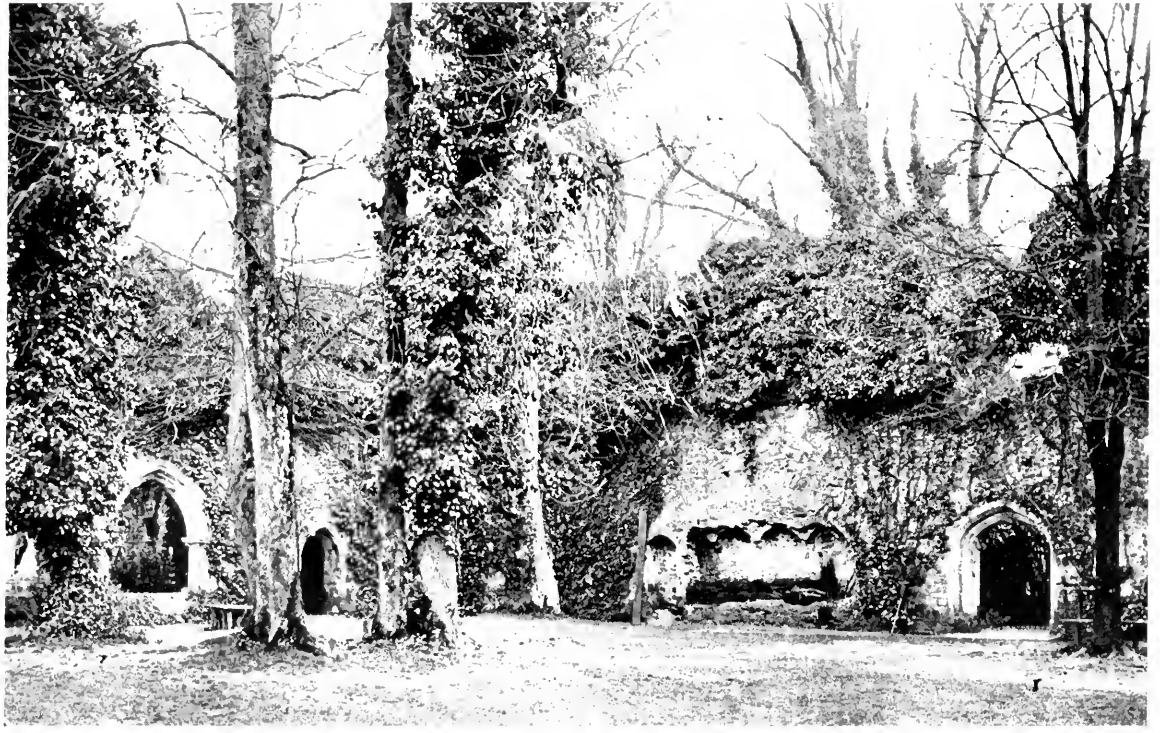
downfall. It fell in the terrible year 1539, when Henry's career of destruction had shown beyond any question that a refusal of his demands meant death in some particularly ghastly shape; and when the "visitors" arrived in December of that year Abbot de Vall and his eighteen monks bowed in submission and signed away the great abbey, whose doom was thus inevitably sealed. At this time its annual revenues amounted to about twenty-five thousand dollars. In the fourth year of Edward VI., the ruins were granted to that memorable knave, John, Earl of Warwick, from whom they passed to Sir Edward Yorke, and thence, during the reign of Mary I., to the house of Cholmley, with whom the estate has remained until now.

Lindisfarne and Whitby, always so closely allied, are also akin in that they are amongst the very few examples of monastic ruins which stand in history for recorded greatness in which they themselves have no part. In both cases the great deeds and the greater men are of a period whereof no architectural memorial survives. The immortality of these two holy places rests on the records of a past, long since old and hoary when the eldest stones that are now in place were fresh from the mason's chisel.

An interregnum of hundreds of years lay between the old régime of St. Cuthbert and St. Hilda, and the new, the memorials of which still remain. After the refounding of each, history has little to say, but it does not follow that their lives were empty and insignificant; rather is it probable that they were of that gentle and beneficent type, so busy with duties ably done and tasks duly accomplished that brave chronicles are out of mind, and the day's work is well done, if done in the Name of God.

BEAULIEU AND NETLEY

ON either side Southampton Water lie the ruins of two abbeys that show very clearly the almost whimsical fate that has overtaken these monuments of a great past. Mother and daughter, the one has been utterly swept away, the other left almost intact down to a comparatively recent time, even now standing in noble ruins sufficient to enable the archæologist to recreate it on paper in all its delicate beauty. Beaulieu, elder by a generation, proud and powerful, the seat of a mitred abbot, vast in its dimensions, rich, domineering, is gone; utterly vanished away, unless one may count some fragments of monastic buildings as still giving it place in space and time. Netley, the modest offshoot, small, humble, unmarked of history or legend, one of those unimportant little centres of religious life and civilization that did its allotted work without boastfulness or ostentation, remaining forgotten until Henry discovered it in its sequestered meadow to its instant death and destruction — Netley in great



Netley. In the Cloisters.

part endures, and has become one of the famous and tourist-haunted incarnations of the picturesque. Its name is linked with that of Tintern, Fountains, and Melrose, but whoever heard of Beaulieu, even under its modern pronunciation of "Bewley"? It is utterly unknown, no longer even a name.

And such is the fate that has fallen to many of the greatest abbeys in England. As I have said before, the most marvellous of all those that, preserved, would have added a new glory to England, and as well have proved beyond question the greatness of her national architecture, St. Edmundsbury, Evesham, Osney, Beaulieu, have been razed to their very foundation stones, or, as in the case of Glastonbury, York, and Gisburgh, are traceable only from battered fragments, whilst insignificant houses like Tintern, Netley and Bolton, spared by the whim of chance, have become the symbols of beauty, majesty and awe.

But the two Hampshire abbeys we shall consider here are linked more closely than by neighbourliness of site and the antitheses of strange fortune: they are both of the same order, the Cistercian, and as Glastonbury, Lindisfarne and Whitby were Benedictine, and therefore of the first great order of monasticism,

it is well that we should thus early turn to the most noble scion of St. Benedict's Rule, the Cistercian, which, immediately and always after, appealing most strongly to men, became in England one of the most efficient and powerful of the monastic orders.

The congregation of Citeaux (Lat. *Cistercium*) was founded in 1092 by St. Robert of Molesme, as a protest against the laxness and luxury that had become only too common among the great Benedictine houses as a result of the miraculous favour the order had received and its resulting wealth and power. St. Robert found immediate and powerful support in the person of Hugh, Apostolic Legate, and Archbishop of Lyons, and, with twenty-one monks gathered from the abbey of Molesme, he departed thence and sought out the most wild and forbidding spot within his ken, and there began the erection of a wooden church and monastery, and the practise of the Rule of St. Benedict in all its purity and severity. So rigid was the manner of life of the new community, it shortly attracted the attention and favour of Otho, Duke of Burgundy, who aided St. Robert with money and lands, so that the new house prospered exceedingly. The great reform thus instituted worked apace, and in

good time the brothers of Molesme prayed Pope Urban that St. Robert might be sent back to them in order that they also might mend their ways: which prayer was granted and the founder of a new order found himself back in his old home, now no longer Benedictine, but Cistercian, and well won back to better modes of life, while the Prior of Citeaux became abbot in his stead.

But the power of the Cistercians was not alone in the pious simplicity and self-denial of their lives, it lay in equal measure in their magnificent and logical organization, the work of St. Stephen Harding, an Englishman, and one of the seceders from Molesme. Each Benedictine house had been practically independent, but among Cistercians, while each monastery was a family in itself, preserving the power of self-perpetuation, all the houses together formed a great corporation under the perpetual headship of the Abbot of Citeaux. Annual Chapters were held at which all abbots and priors were bound to be present, and through these General Chapters was obtained that absolute uniformity in life, discipline, and teaching which was one of the chief marks of Cistercianism. The order increased amazingly: within fifty years five hundred houses had come

into existence, in another fifty this number had increased to fifteen hundred.

Much of this success was undoubtedly due to the fierce piety and the majestic intellect of St. Bernard, the greatest single glory of the Cistercian Order. He became a novice in Citeaux because of the then poverty and severity of this house. His fame spread rapidly, Citeaux became thronged with ardent followers, discipline became lax, and the crowded monks began to get out of hand, so the abbot gave twelve of the most zealous of them in charge of St. Bernard, and sent them off to found in the "Valley of Wormwood" the new and still more rigid monastery of Clairvaux.

St. Bernard became undoubtedly the most famous man of his time. "He was the arbiter in Papal elections, the judge in temporal quarrels, the healer of schisms, and a powerful preacher of the Crusades. He was the embodiment of all that was best in the thought of his age. . . . He was brave, honest and pure; controlled always by a consuming passion for the moral welfare of the people."* So great was his persuasive eloquence that during his life it was said that "mothers hid their sons, wives their husbands, and companions their

*Professor Wishart: "Monks and Monasteries."

Netley. The Monks' Garden.

friends, lest they be persuaded by his eloquent message to enter the cloister." Materially also the monks of Clairvaux were a blessing, for they very shortly changed the desert of Wormwood into a rich and fertile country, wiped out the robbers with whom it was once infested, and became the leaders of the people not alone in spiritual, but in material things. "His soon canonized name has shone starlike in history ever since he was buried, and it will not hereafter decline from its height or lose its lustre, while men continue to recognize with honour the temper of devoted Christian consecration, a character compact of noble forces and infused with self-forgetful love of God and man."*

With such founders as St. Robert of Molesme, St. Stephen Harding and St. Bernard of Clairvaux, the Cistercian Order could only succeed, even though it held up before man the sternest and most forbidding modes of life and refused the appeal of splendid ritual and convincing art. For many years the abbeys of the Cistercians were distinguished by their fierce rejection of the richness and beauty of the Benedictines. Bell-towers were forbidden; carving, stained glass, pictures (except of course the crucifix and representations of our Lord), were

* Dr. Storrs: "Bernard of Clairvaux."

strictly prohibited. Gold and silver vessels and rich stuffs and embroideries were under the ban. The churches themselves were of the utmost simplicity and of the fewest number of parts. Later, when this curious twelfth century Puritanism had outgrown its fear of beauty, the sumptuary laws were much relaxed, but stern simplicity and restraint always remained as a mark of the Cistercian Order.

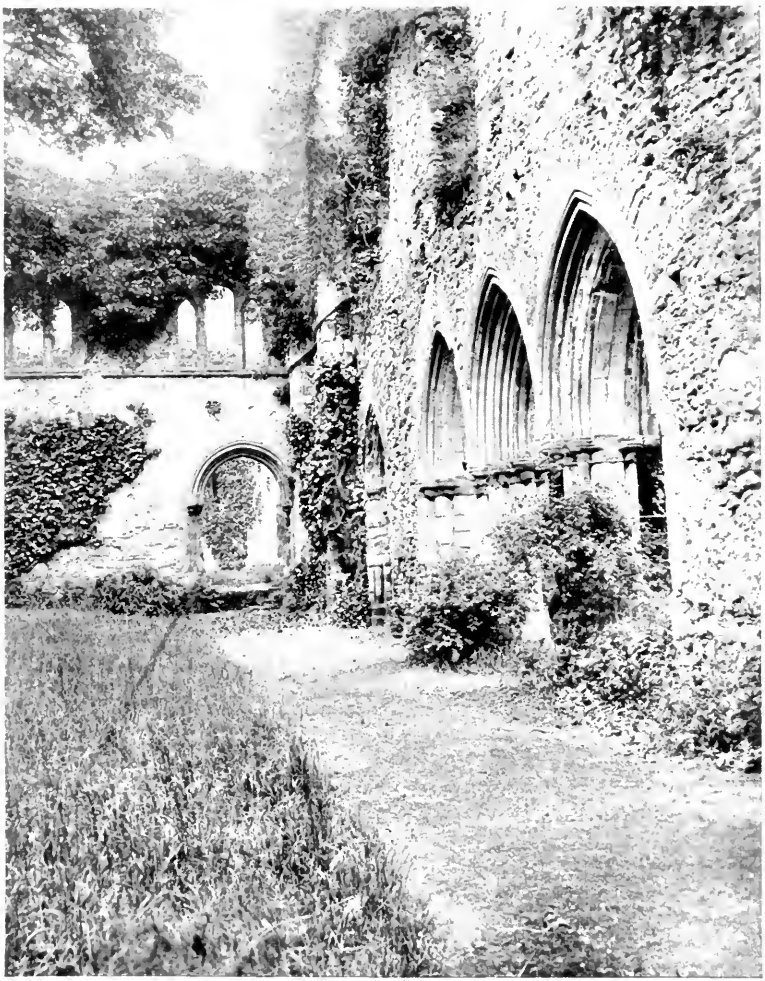
The life of the monastery was ordered on no less a rigorous scale. The monks wore a rough white robe without a cowl, and shirt, gloves and boots were forbidden; the head was entirely shaved, four hours of sleep was all that was allowed, meat was never eaten, fish but seldom, and from Easter until September there was but one meal a day. The monasteries were invariably built in the wildest and most remote places, though always where nature was, or could be made, most beautiful, and to this fact is due the merciful preservation of so many of these noble structures, while those of the friendly and companionable Benedictines have been swept into extinction.

Remoteness — it seems strange to postulate this quality now when one thinks of near and grimy Southampton — remoteness saved Netley, or all there was left to save when Henry's

"visitors" had gone; but it was powerless in the case of the vast and far-flung Beaulieu, for it lay along tide-water, and, enormous quarry that it was, proved materially available for the king's purposes. Down to its very footing-stones it fell, and was shipped down the Exe for the building of Hurst Castle. With the exception of one low wall of the south aisle of the nave, not one stone of the church remains literally on another. The refectory was spared, and has become a parish church, adequate enough in these latter days for the accommodation of the handful of local worshippers; the arches of the chapter house door still stand, though hardly, leaning now into the cloister-garth at a perilous angle; the house of the lay brothers is still intact, in part, and forms a museum; but all else is gone, and there remains little of actual beauty, or even picturesqueness, of what must once have been one of the wonders of England.

Fortunately, the place is now in the hands of a thoughtful and reverent custodian — Baron Montagu, of Beaulieu — and nothing more will perish, though in fact there is little enough left to save. One thing Lord Montagu has done which deserves the highest commendation: gone is the great church, every vestige of

it, but in the close-cropped, emerald turf the location of every wall and pier has been traced in tawny sand, and so from a slight elevation one may look down as upon a vast coloured plan, three hundred and fifty feet long and two hundred feet wide. Thus one may trace the form and disposition of what must once have been a majestic church: a great nave of nine bays, a crossing and central tower, a north transept of five and a south of four bays, and a complete double aisled choir with a circular termination, almost the only example of this purely continental type that had endured in England down to the Suppression. Here was a plan as French as might be, so far as its eastern termination was concerned, yet built by English masons in the most vital years of the thirteenth century. It is true the abbot is believed to have brought over from Rouen a certain master mason named Durandus, but his services were undoubtedly confined to working out the great *chevet;* all else must have been purely English and contemporary with such masterpieces as the "Nine Altars," Durham, the west fronts of Peterborough and Wells, and the choirs of Whitby and Rievaulx. The great church was begun in 1221, and consecrated in the presence of King Henry III. and



Notley—The Monks' Door to the Church.

his Queen; Richard, Earl of Cornwall, King of the Romans and Emperor of Germany, and a great throng of prelates and nobles, on June 21, 1244. It is impossible to call up in vision any adequate semblance of what it must have been: severe, undoubtedly, for such was the Cistercian ideal, but with equal certainty perfectly proportioned, for here this order seldom erred. It was not of enormous size, being but three hundred and sixty feet long and one hundred and ninety across the transepts, about the dimensions, let us say, of Wells cathedral.

The loss of Beaulieu is irreparable in the history of English architecture. Westminster was a few years later and possibly patterned on it, Tewksbury is a full century further advanced. Beaulieu was the first example of the *chevet* in England, therefore the most precious. When Henry crushed such work as this into building stone he destroyed the most priceless records of the development of English art.

Now, as of old, Beaulieu stands isolated and aloof; no railway is near, and it lies in an emerald oasis surrrounded by wild and uncouth moors. The site itself is exquisite, a dip of gentle valley sloping toward the sun, just where the salt from the Channel water mingles with the upland

flood of the Exe. Green meadows and flowery orchards stretch all around, and majestic trees lean over the winding and cloistered roads. Although the church itself was not notably large, the conventual buildings were elaborate, complete, and widespread: even now fragments of grey masonry crop up in scores of unexpected places, indicating the sites of mills, barns, granaries, store-rooms, brew-houses and wine-presses. This was once a great country for grapes, and the old terraces of the monastic vineyards may still be traced on the hillside to the north. The precincts of the abbey were very large, the walls extending over a mile and a quarter, and the privilege of sanctuary of which the abbey was possessed reached some twenty paces farther in all directions. Many persons sought sanctuary within these walls at different times; for their protection, except to murderers, was absolute. Margaret of Anjou, Queen to Henry VI., and her son, Prince Edward, availed themselves of it on their landing in England at the time of the Battle of Barnet, as did Anne of Warwick, the Marquis of Dorset, and Perkin Warbeck after the failure of his rising in the West. At the time of the Surrender thirty-two men with their families were safely ensconced within the walls, but Crum-

well made short work of them when once the abbot was dispossessed.

Some idea of the power of one of these great monasteries may be gained from traces still existing of the centre of trade built up by the monks outside their gates. Here at the head of tide-water, in a most out-of-the-way spot, a great stone quay was constructed, to which came ships from foreign lands. Near by was a great market-place, now, as then, called Cheapside, though commerce exists there no longer. At the height of monastic glory the religious houses were actually the chief centres of industry and civilization, and around them grew up the eager villages, many of which now exist, even though their impulse and original inspiration have long since departed. Of course the possessions of the abbey reached far away from the walls in every direction, including many farms even at a great distance, for the abbeys were then the great land-owners, and beneficent landlords they were as well, even in their last days, for we have many records of the cruelty and hardships that came to the tenants the moment the stolen lands came into the hands of laymen.

Another evidence of the industry and far-seeing wisdom of the monks may be found in

their care for a pure and copious water supply and adequate drainage. Here at Beaulieu the water was brought by an underground conduit from an unfailing spring, a mile away, and this served for drinking, washing and bathing, the supply of the fish ponds, and for a constant flushing of the elaborate system of drainage. In sanitary matters the monks were as far in advance of the rest of society as they were in learning and in agriculture. For century after century they were the centres of civilization, from which radiated the influence that has made English character what it is: to them, more than to any other single power in the land, is due the sterling character of our forefathers.

Beaulieu was founded in the year 1204, by King John, according to legend, in expiation of his hatred and persecution of the Cistercians, the wickedness of which had been revealed to him in a dream. The effective cause does not seem adequate, but, in any case, his favour became pronounced, for he gave the order much land here in the New Forest, with extraordinary privileges therein, a grant of money from the royal treasury, a great store of corn, one hundred and twenty cows, twelve bulls, a golden chalice, and a yearly present of a tun of wine: a somewhat motley beneficence, but useful

Netley—The West Front

withal: moreover, he ordered all the Cistercian abbots in England to join in building here a glorious abbey.

Thirty-five years after this unique exhibition of generosity on the part of King John, Netley was founded as a cell of Beaulieu by a colony of monks from the already rich and numerous abbey, obtaining its charter from King Henry III. in 1239. Modest in its beginnings, it always remained an inconspicuous little house, hidden away by the low-lying shores of Southampton Water, until indeed it was discovered to be one of the most perfectly beautiful little ruins in all England, when it speedily became a haunt of the tripper, a Mecca of the excursionist: and little wonder, for its beauty and charm are almost beyond comparison. Also, it is accessible, almost a suburb of Southampton, and fast being surrounded by the horrible brick tenements, shoddy "villas," and sordid shops that mark the van of on-rushing civilization. Still the pride of the "Jerrybuilder" stops short of the abbey precincts; the dim and sheltering wood is still intact, and the shore for a space is as yet undefiled.

Now, however, even as in the time of Walpole, Netley, whether under the sun or moon, is a mystical vision that quite justifies the

rhapsody of Sir Horace: "They are not the ruins of Netley but of Paradise. Oh! the Purple Abbots! what a spot they had chosen to slumber in!" From the deep-wooded road one turns down into a green meadow starred with a galaxy of glimmering daisies, then to the left opens a narrow archway in a shattered wall. Nothing more is visible: no spires of toppling wall, no blank-windowed tower, nothing but a dense, impervious screen of luxuriant foliage.

Pass the turnstile and in a breath we are in the very cloister-garth itself: the cloisters are vanished utterly, but here is a deep-turfed court, thick with slim trees, four square, and bounded by ragged walls hung deep with glistening ivy. Behind lies the site of the refectory, which has been wholly destroyed, except for its cloister wall; to the left the quarters of the lay brothers, to the right the wonderful triple arches of the chapter house, and in front, seen dimly through the trees, the windowed wall of the south aisle of the church, with the transept lifting to the highest point of all in the angle. All the buildings to the south of the cloister have been destroyed, rebuilt as a dwelling, and destroyed again, but the eastern range is still fairly complete, though much mutilated by alterations made by the Marquis of Win-

chester (to whom, as Sir William Paulet, it was granted at the Suppression) to adapt his new possessions to the purposes of a dwelling, and scathed by fire when it was destroyed at the time of the Great Rebellion, then being in the hands of the ever faithful Marquis of Hertford.

As we enter through the little door of the monks and emerge into the church itself we realize at once how dire has been the destruction, though full knowledge of the exquisite beauty that then passed away does not come until we have begun to pore over the fragments that still remain.

Netley has passed through many hands, none of them conspicuously tender, until recent years. On the death of Winchester, in 1572, it came into the possession of the Earl of Hertford, thence to that of his heir, Edward Seymour, who suffered so notably at the hands of the strenuous Elizabeth because of his marriage to the sister of Lady Jane Grey. Later another alliance brought political disgrace to an owner of Netley, the same loyal Marquis of Hertford who subsequently stood so strongly for his king. By marrying the Lady Arabella Stuart he had brought himself into disfavour with James I., had escaped to the Continent and had returned to prove a faithful servant of King James's

lawful successors. Late in the seventeenth century the abbey came to the Earl of Huntingdon, and it was not until then that the actual ruin of the church began. The Noble Earl turned the nave into a tennis court, piously reserving the choir as his own private chapel, while the chapter house became a kitchen, and other of the conventual buildings were made into stables. For many years the south transept also was used as a stable, floors having been introduced at various levels, the beautiful stonework being ruthlessly hacked into and weakened in the process: whether this transmutation took place under the same Noble Earl would be hard to say, but we may believe it, since the combination of tennis court and chapel and stable would have been singularly picturesque and quaintly indicative of the temper of the seventeenth century. In 1700 Sir Berkeley Lucy took his turn at ownership and made a fine revelation of his thrift and practicality by selling the entire church to one Walter Taylor, a builder of Southampton, on condition that it be wholly removed. At this time, incredible as it may seem, the church remained still perfect in every structural particular.

The connection of Master Taylor with Netley Abbey was not happy: a Nonconformist and

friend of the father of the eminent Dr. Watts, he had been advised by him to have no part in the impending sacrilege, as the worthy man did not hesitate to pronounce it. Still persisting in his negotiations with Sir Berkeley, he became tormented by dreams in which his instant death was foretold if he laid hands on the sacred stones. Still determined to win what profits he could from the sale of the abbey as so much building stone, he was next visited by the ghost of a gaunt old monk in a white habit, who warned him that if he dared so much as to begin his evil work the roof should fall and crush him. Filed with terror, but urged on by a fierce cupidity, the unhappy man signed his agreement with Lucy, removed the roof, destroyed the vaulting of the choir, nave, and north transept, together with the central tower, and was beginning on the west end when the tracery of the great window fell suddenly, fracturing his skull and inflicting other hurts, whereof he forwith died.

For a time the course of ruin was stayed. A Mr. Clift acquired what remained, and in time transferred it to Sir Nathaniel Holland. Lady Holland, inspired by the chaste emotions of the eighteenth century, and desiring an example of "The Picturesque" in her park, re-

moved the entire north transept for the purpose of fabricating a tasteful ruin therein. Here the wretched story comes to an end. Mr. Chamberlayne, the next owner, was a gentleman, and as early as 1861 he took steps to preserve such of the abbey as was left, and it is now safe. The treatment accorded it has been absolutely judicious; it has not been furbished up into smug neatness, as has been the case with Tintern and Kirkstall; it is not abandoned to cumulative decay like Rievaulx. The trees and luxuriant ivy are kept well within bounds, the débris has been removed, the disintegration stopped. As a result Netley is a faultless ruin, a thing of almost unimaginable beauty, half because of the greatness of its art, half by reason of the fact that it is regarded, not as an archæological specimen, but as a picture, as a living poem. Viewed in this light, it is perhaps the most wholly lovely thing amongst all the abbeys of Great Britain.

Materially, it is one of the smallest. The church was but two hundred and twenty feet over all, wholly vaulted in stone; its height inside was only forty-three feet, yet so exquisite is it in its proportions, the actual dimensions when discovered come almost as a shock. In style it is of that early and noble thirteenth

century that is so gravely reserved, so pure in its classicality. Cistercian vigour marks it all, but also Cistercian seriousness and loftiness of impulse. It is all a study in subtle proportions and sensitive line. Greek, if you like, since the word means a certain perfection; but actually no classical building ever showed the finality of the absolutely attained in such measure as do some examples of pure Gothic, like Netley, York Abbey, Rievaulx. Such buildings as these are marvels of complex simplicity; they are the most highly organized of the works of man. Nothing could be more severe and masterly than the shafts of the south transept, nothing more vibrant with life, yet full of gracious repose, than the arches of the chapter house. As late as 1859, the slender shafts of Purbeck marble still encircled the columns of this perfect doorway, and remained indeed in many other parts of the church as well; but a strike taking place, the men employed on the great Victoria Hospital near by amused themselves and obtained a few shillings for drink by tearing them all away and selling them to be worked into chimney-pieces by thrifty manufacturers of the neighbourhood. We curse the Turk for his destruction of the classical wonders of Greece; does it ever occur to us that in our treatment

of the Gothic wonders of England we have matched him in his own field?

Apart from its wonderful classicism, Netley is full of evidences of the burgeoning vitality of the thirteenth century. The ponderous Norman is only a few years behind, and yet here is true and brilliant Gothic of a very perfect type, full, too, of that constant reaching out for new ideas so characteristic of English work. In the splays of the aisle windows, the development of the piers, the treatment of arcade, triforium, and clerestory, the working out of the vaulting, there is visible an almost passionate originality and invention, contrasting strangely with the cold and scientific work of the contemporary builders in France, who, amongst a certain class of critics, are held to be the only Gothic builders in history.

But to the world the charm of Netley will always lie in its infinite picturesqueness. No ruin in England has shaped itself into such an infinite variety of pictures: it is a painter's paradise, yet none paints it: a poet's inspiration, yet none seems ever to have fallen under its spell. One may wander through and around it day after day finding

"... some knowledge at each pause
Or some new thing to know."

Beaulieu. The Cloister Garth.

Beaulieu. The Chapter House Portal.

When the spangled turf is wet with dew and the mist from the water is veiling the sundered walls; when the sun rides high and the mellow stone glows deep and golden, whilst deep shadows lurk under the transept vaults; when the light is level at sunset and the grassy pavement is slashed with golden bars; in sun and shadow, in mist or rain, it is the very haunt of poetry, a dream-like emanation of the past, set here on the verge of the insistent, clamorous present.

But it is most wonderful of all by moonlight. The silence is absolute, profound, the harsh edges of the riven stones are softened, the closing forest mingles with the dark ivy and turf, and out of the great shadow shafts and arches grow pale and white, seemingly hung in the void: or, from another point, vacant windows closed by splendid arches shape themselves dark against the luminous sky. "Oh, the Purple Abbots! What a spot they had chosen to slumber in," indeed.

TINTERN

FROM Netley it is no far cry to Tintern, that other Cistercian abbey on the Wye, that rivals it in beauty of situation and classical nobility of style, even though assiduous care for its preservation has robbed it of the wild picturesqueness that leaves Netley first among the absolute epics of monastic England. Tintern is supremely wonderful for situation amongst scores of rivals: it lies on the very brink of the river, in a hollow of the hills of Monmouth, sheltered from harsh winds, warmed by the breezes of the channel, a very nook in an earthly Eden. Somehow, the winter seems to fall more lightly here, the spring to come earlier, the foliage to take on a deeper green, the grass a greater thickness, the flowers a more multitudinous variety, a more poignant sweetness. Here the breakneck hills are clothed to their crests in deep forests; the intervales and meadows are lush and warm; the sky itself is of a softer splendour. If, as should always be the case, the pilgrim comes lazily by boat down the

winding Wye from Ross, he makes a perfect approach. Behind him is the grateful memory of a wonderfully good little inn on the very walls of Ross castle (good in all but its architecture, which is unspeakable); before him, though he may not know it as yet, is the promise of equally generous entertainment in the rambling and ivy-covered old inn at Tintern, from the garden of which, as he drinks his tea of an afternoon, he may watch the low sun turn the stones of the abbey into burnished gold, so close at hand that a rose tossed from the terrace would fall almost at the foot of the walls.

And the voyage itself is something long to be remembered; a river of infinite moods, now languid and brooding, now fierce and turbulent to such an extent that sharp skill is necessary on the part of the boatman to avoid incontinent shipwreck. The river winds back and forth, now through level meadows crowded with ruminant cattle, now between steep-terraced hills fat with luxuriant foliage, with here and there red crags of old castles breaking the velvet pall. No cities or upstart towns clog the banks, or foul the water; no factory chimneys blast the view. It is all a sweet and idyllic place. Now and then white swans float by, perhaps, if you are fortunate, convoying a little flotilla

of downy cygnets, though this is a thing seen no more than once in a decade; in the season salmon fishers are omnipresent and humanly prone to resent the disturbing intrusion of the heedless voyager.

The ruin of Tintern, like that of so many of the sequestered Cistercian abbeys, is the fruit of time long continued and of scornful neglect. When Abbot Wych, the last of a line that had endured for nearly three centuries, surrendered the abbey to Henry on September 1, 1537, it was handed over to the Earl of Worcester, who left it severely alone as did his successors for generations. Through them it descended to the ducal house of Beaufort, and with the glimmerings of renewed civilization in the latter half of the nineteenth century its fortunes changed. Every vestige of vaulting had gone, together with the central tower, while the north arcade and clerestory of the nave had entirely disappeared; otherwise the church itself was practically intact, barring, of course, the altars, screens, and window tracery. All the monastic buildings were in ruins, though none had been wholly destroyed. On the whole, it was almost the best preserved of the ruined abbeys of England. His Grace of Beaufort stopped the disintegration where it stood, and the great monument,

Tintern. The Cross-ing.

now having become Crown property, is probably destined to permanent preservation.

Of course this means a certain loss in picturesqueness: nearly all the clambering ivy has been removed, every fragment of cut stone recovered is carefully cherished, and, when possible, replaced in a plausible position. The abbey is now preserved with the most jealous care, but it has become an archæological monument and furnishes a startling contrast to Netley, the mystical haunt of poetry, the apotheosis of natural beauty. Probably this is all very wise, for Tintern is a singularly noble and perfect example of the purest Cistercian Gothic of the mid-thirteenth century. It is the next step after Netley, as this followed close in architectural development after Beaulieu. Begun just thirty years after the corner-stones were laid at Netley, *i.e.*, A.D. 1269, it represents that noble transition from the early pointed to the so-called "geometrical" style. Coëval with York Abbey, it is a perfect counterfoil; on the one hand the severe asceticism of the Cistercians, on the other the opulence and majesty and the rejoicing in consummate art of the Benedictines. No sharper contrast would be possible. In the north the gleaming walls and pearly interior of the vast fabric wrought of a

limestone as white and pure as marble, fretted with infinite enrichment of delicately chiselled arcades, niches, canopies and pinnacles, and with jambstones and capitals and corbels all carved with exquisite, intricate foliage. Here in the south, these unwrought, unsculptured walls of ashen grey, slashed with long windows of severest form: within, cut sandstone for shaft and string course, archivolt and vaulting rib, the rest rough rubble, once coated with plain white plaster: not a cap is carved, and hardly a corbel; the great bosses of the vaults that now lie reversed in the green turf were chiselled indeed, but one feels that even they were probably an offence to the first abbots.

Yet north and south, Benedictine and Cistercian, sundered as are the two structures in design, material, and detail, they are equally wonderful in that one greatest quality of great art — proportion. Here at Tintern one is blinded by no blandishment of ravishing detail: the composition stands forth as simple and direct as that of the Parthenon. All is laid bare, and we see how pure and how perfect it all is, how severely classical, how gravely and faultlessly competent. Here, in a presence like this, we realize how futile is the contemporary striving after success through lavished detail, if behind

it all is not the masterly composition and proportion and relation of parts that are the only beginnings wherefrom success may come. Tintern demonstrates at once the things that are indispensable in art, the things that are superficial.

It is not a large church, only some two hundred and eighty-eight feet in length by one hundred and fifty-one feet in extreme breadth across the transepts; the central aisle of the nave is thirty-three feet wide, while the height is sixty-nine feet. Here we see at once the great divergence from the earliest type as at Netley, where, with about the same nave width, the height was but forty-three feet. The church is cruciform, of course, with a short nave of six bays, a choir of four and transepts of three. The arcade is singularly noble and well proportioned; the triforium is missing, and its place is taken by a wide space of unbroken wall subdivided by the vaulting shafts. The vault itself springs from the upper course of this pseudo-triforium, and the clerestory windows are of two narrow lights rather awkwardly comprised within the vault triangle. In Netley the grouped lancets of the earliest English Gothic, as at Whitby and Rievaulx, have given place to great windows divided by columnal

mullions, and here at Tintern there is a still further advance, the tall, slim-shafted window of the south transept, seventeen feet wide and fifty-two feet high, being a stroke of masterly genius, while the east window is, or was, a wonderful thing, twenty-seven feet in breadth, and no less than fifty-five feet in clear altitude.

Netley, better than any other Cistercian church, shows the original divisions of the interior by means of walls of solid stone, some ten or fifteen feet high. An abbey church of this order was not one great open space broken only by piers and columns: it was subdivided until it really became a series of apartments, separated from each other by low walls of masonry. In the first place, both transepts and the north and south aisles of the choir and nave were shut off entirely by solid screens between all the columns of the arcade and reaching from the east wall to the west. Midway the length of the church — here at Tintern one bay west of the tower — was a transverse wall — the "*pulpitum*" — dividing the central enclosed space in two. To the east were the sanctuary, choir and crossing, the space reserved for the monks themselves, and here, beneath the great east window, was the high altar. The

Tintern Abbey from the River Wye.

enclosure to the west was for the use of the lay brothers, who frequently largely outnumbered the monks. The latter came by day for their many services through the aisle door to the cloisters, by night down the long flight of steps in the transept from the "dorter," which was above the chapter house and day room: the "*conversi*," or lay brothers, entered from the extreme west of the nave, their quarters always adjoining the church at the west end. In addition to the walls already named there were those that divided the transept altars one from another. Sometimes, in Cistercian churches, the nave was still further subdivided by a rood screen a bay or two to the west of the *pulpitum*. As the churches of the order were invariably dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, the eastern Lady chapel was unnecessary, and is never found in Cistercian establishments.

As we have seen in the case of Netley, the original principles of the Cistercians forbade all ornament in the shape of carving, painting, glass, embroidery, and goldsmith's work; but it is doubtful if these rigid laws were ever wholly enforced: as a matter of fact, one of the first times stained glass is mentioned in England is in the year 1140, in connection with certain windows in Rievaulx Abbey, the chief and head

of all the English Cistercian houses. And here at Tintern, severe and simple as is the fabric of the church itself, the random fragments of defaced sculpture that are piled in heaps indicate very clearly that in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the function of art as the most faithful handmaid of religion had been duly recognized. The Cistercian and the Puritan each rejected beauty for the same reason; the Puritan never learned his error, the Cistercian had but to enunciate his doctrine of renunciation to prove its fallacy, even to himself: the first became the synonym for æsthetic ignorance and wilful blindness to a very potent agency for salvation: the second left his name linked forever with one of the noblest phases of a noble art, and as well with the very foundation of English civilization.

It is a very terrible thing to scrutinize these heaped up fragments of wilfully shattered glory, these shapeless blocks of moss-covered stone, some one facet of which is sure to show a space of subtly chiselled tracery or an hand's breadth of tender foliage wrought with love and enthusiasm out of the ready rock. As one turns over stone after stone in search of scraps of art, or digs with a penknife through deep layers of moss to free some lovely capital to the eye, one

realizes what, to art at least, the Suppression actually meant.

Where they belonged, these poor little fragments of pure beauty, it is impossible to say, many of them in altars, reredoses and shrines, others undoubtedly in the great rood screen that separated the monks' choir from that of the lay brothers, and against which to the west stood the altar of the *conversi.* One speculates in vain as to how this, or any other abbey, must have looked in the last year of the fifteenth century. With its great windows filled with splendid glass (like that perhaps still preserved at Malvern), its many altars and shrines wrought in such fashion as all the wealth of a great "captain of industry" could not bring into being to-day; its myriad lights, its vestments stiff with needlework and jewels; its long processions of white-robed monks, its longer lines of cowled *conversi;* its constant visitors, bishops, cardinals, nobles, and even kings — it must have been a marvellous concatenation of varied beauty. And at midnight, when the great church was black and silent save for the candles on the high altar, the lamps before the shrines, and the tapers at the huge lectern and in the stalls; when down the transept stairway came the long file of white brothers, cowled and dumb,

for the first offices of the new day, Matins and Lauds; and when, assembled in the dusky choir, each monk in his carven and canopied stall, the antiphonal chants surged back and forth through the dark, it must have been unparalleled in its effect of solemnity and awe.

The remains of the monastic buildings are sufficiently complete to give a clear idea of the arrangement of such an house as this. The Cistercian plan is almost invariable: the cloister is the centre of everything, and lies almost always south and west of the south transept. At Tintern the conventual buildings lay to the north, probably in order that the slope of the land toward the river might furnish better drainage. All the rooms reserved for the monks and lay brothers — except the infirmary, which always lay to the east and at a distance, and in later times the lodgings of the abbot — opened from the great cloister. This was far from being a mere passageway — it was the very centre of the common life, the adjacent rooms were hardly more than appendages. Ordinarily, the north cloister, adjoining the nave of the church, was the one warmed by the sun, and here were the stone seats for all the brothers, that of the abbot being next the door of the church and in a position from which he

Tintern. The West Front.

could command a view of both the north and east cloisters. At the southerly end of the east cloister the novice-master held his training school; the west walk belonged to the junior monks; the south, being always cold and sunless, was used simply as a passageway, and contained the great stone basins where the monks washed before and after meals. Usually the door from the outer world was at the western end of the south cloister, jealously guarded by the porter, that no one might be "suffered to molest or trouble the said novices or monks in their carrels while they were at their books within the cloister."* These "carrels" were little framed compartments, one for each monk, where he might give himself to uninterrupted study of copying or illumination, and at the same time be somewhat protected from the cold in winter: they were "finely wainscotted and very close, all but the fore part which had carved work to give light in at their carrel doors. And in every carrel was a desk to lie their books on and the carrel was no greater than from one stanchell of the window to another. And over against the carrels, against the church wall did stand certain great aumbries of wainscott all full of books, with great store

*"The Rites of Durham."

of antient manuscripts to help them in their study . . . so that every one did study what Doctor pleased him best, having the library at all times to go and study in besides these carrels."*

This description applies more closely to Benedictine than to Cistercian monasteries, for the latter order was not as passionately addicted to learning as was the former, yet in every monastery the cloister was the great centre of common life: unfortunately, not one Cistercian cloister remains in all Great Britain, therefore we can know little of its distinctive features. How important it was is shown by the fact that here at Tintern, for instance, the Earl of Pembroke left by will, in 1491, one hundred tons of stone for the building of a new cloister: the work had hardly begun at the time of the Suppression, and only a few fragments now remain, showing how rich and elaborate in its Perpendicular detail this fine new cloister would have been. Judging from the stones that still stand, it would have rivalled even that of Gloucester itself.

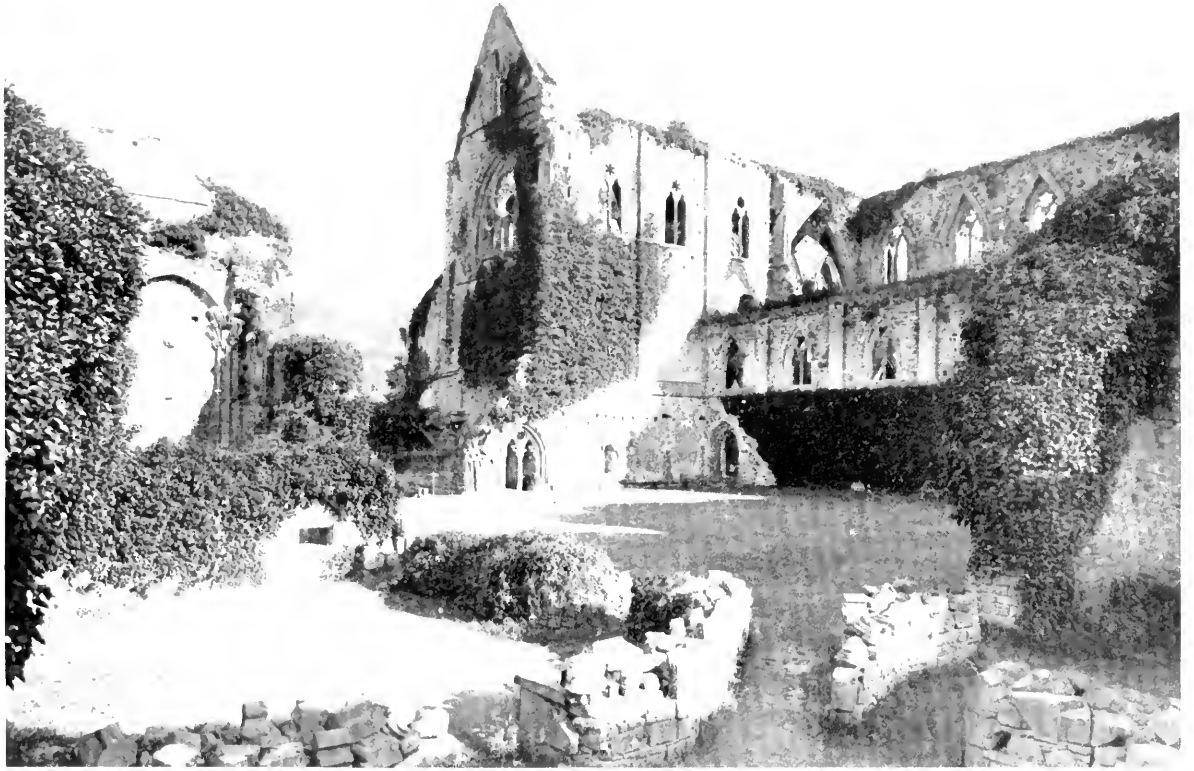
Opening from the cloister to the east, and adjoining the transept wall, are two small rooms, one a sacristy, the other perhaps a place of public penance. Next them is the chapter

* "The Rites of Durham."

house, the executive, spiritual, and disciplinary centre of the entire monastery. Here were assembled daily, after the chapter mass, all the religious under the presidency of the abbot, or, in his absence, of the prior, for the reading of the Martyrology, the morning prayers, legislation, discipline, transaction of temporal business, affixing of seals, drafting of official letters, hearing the petitions of postulants, indeed all the corporate affairs of the community. Adjoining the chapter house is a small room, possibly a library, then follows the slype, or passage to the graveyard and infirmary, and at the end on this side the monks' day room, once a very beautiful apartment with a vaulted ceiling supported by a central row of slender columns. Turning the corner of the cloister we come next to the hall and stairway to the great dormitory or "dorter," which took in all the second story of the eastern range of buildings, abutting against the transept, where the night stairway led down into the church. Midway of the north cloister stood the refectory, commonly called the "fratry," though this name is sometimes given the day room. This apartment was always third in dignity, the church and chapter house alone taking precedence. Here at Tintern it was a very noble room, about eighty feet

long and nearly thirty feet wide, lighted by beautiful and interesting windows, showing the transition from thirteenth to fourteenth century modes; the pulpit, which has wholly disappeared, except for its stairway, occupied its regular position in the midst of the west wall. Between the refectory and day room was the warming room, with a curious chimney that takes one back almost to the time when fires were built in the middle of the floor, the smoke escaping as best it could through an opening in the roof; here the hearth is full in the midst of the room, but a great stone hood is over it, supported on masonry piers, the flue rising from the apex of the hood: the fire was, of course, accessible from four sides, and must have wasted none of its heat, which was undoubtedly welcome enough to the monks, numb from two hours of midnight devotions in the icy church in midwinter. In a corresponding position to the west of the refectory was the kitchen, and beyond this, filling in the west side of the cloister, was the house of the lay brothers.

This was the standard monastic type; the variants from it, while numerous, were unimportant, except in so far, of course, as the houses of the Carthusians and Gilbertines were concerned. Having seen one group such as this at Tintern,



Tintern—The North Transept and Cloister Garth.

you have seen all, but in point of plan alone: their architectural and pictorial variety is measured only by the number of the ruins that still remain from the dark ages of the early sixteenth century. The thirteenth century was the great age of monastic building, and it was so well done that unless conflagrations made new work necessary, little or nothing was added to the monastic buildings themselves, apart from the churches, which were receiving constant additions in the shape of altars, chapels, chantries, and even new choirs, towers, and cloisters. The architecture of this time has suffered more than that of any succeeding period through the wilful destruction of the monasteries, which were the noblest and most perfect examples of this first and purest form of English Gothic.

The history of Tintern has largely sunk into absolute oblivion. When at last the Marquis of Worcester, for his devoted and whole-souled loyalty to his king, surrendered Raglan Castle to the Crumwellian army, after a masterly defence that has been well recorded in George McDonald's "St. George and St. Michael," the castle was ruthlessly burned, and with it perished not alone the records of his son's many inventions and his own great library, but also the abbey records, which had been removed

from Tintern when the mutilated monument was granted to the Marquis's ancestor, the Earl of Worcester, by Henry VIII. We know that the first foundation of a monastery on this site was at the hands of a son of Richard de Bienfaite, a cousin of William the Conqueror, who assumed the family name of Clare from one of the Suffolk manors granted to him by the new king. Walter, the third son, founded the abbey in 1131, died without issue, and was buried in the abbey in 1139. He was succeeded by his nephew, Gilbert "Strongbow," who was also buried at Tintern in 1149. His granddaughter Isabel married William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke; and her daughter, marrying Hugh Bigod, brought the estates to the ducal house of Norfolk; her grand-nephew, Roger Bigod, becoming the true founder of the Cistercian abbey of Tintern, A.D. 1269. This was in the midst of the great days of King Henry III., Prince Edward, Stephen Langton, Robert Grosseteste, Simon de Montfort, and Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, himself a descendant of the first founder of Tintern Abbey. Two years before, the barons had won their fight against Henry III. for constitutional government in England, and the people, throwing off the last of their foreign shackles, had become once more a nation.

When the new Cistercian foundation came into being, Prince Edward was on Crusade, so utterly was the kingdom at peace; and three years after the corner-stone was laid he returned to rejuvenated England as king, and king of all the people.

It is well to remember, in studying these monastic remains, that it is to the Cistercians in a very large degree that we owe the arousing of the English people against Stephen, John, and those others of the French line of monarchs who were doing their best to make England a wilderness, or worse. At the accession of Stephen, the Church, wholly under the dominion of Norman bishops, had almost ceased to be the moral and spiritual head of the people. The Benedictine order had suffered with the rest, but the coming of the Cistercians brought a new and wholesome life. "At the close of Henry's reign, and throughout the reign of Stephen, England was stirred by the first of those great religious movements which it was to experience afterwards. . . . Everywhere, in town and country, men banded themselves together for prayer: hermits flocked to the woods: noble and churl welcomed the austere Cistercians, a reformed offshoot of the Benedictine order, as they spread over the moors and forests of the north.

. . . The paralysis of the Church ceased as the new impulse bound prelacy and people together, and at the moment we have reached its power was found strong enough to wrest England out of the chaos of feudal misrule."* It was indeed the bishops who led — men like Theobald of Canterbury, and St. Thomas à Becket, as earlier St. Anselm had fought against William Rufus, as later Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, was to set himself against John. But the bishops would have been helpless without the supporting will of the people, and for this we must thank in great measure the stern and uncompromising monks who were gathered together by St. Robert of Molesme, organized by the Englishman, St. Stephen Harding, and inspired by St. Bernard of Clairvaux. This brought a new righteousness into England, heartened an oppressed and miserable race, and led to Magna Carta. The ruined abbeys of Great Britain stand not alone for a great epoch of art, a milestone in the progress of civilization, an absorbing and unique episode in social progress, they are as well the visible, yet vanishing, records of a mighty movement that brought a people out of bondage, and made England a great, a powerful, and, for many centuries, a righteous nation.

* Green: "History of the English People."

Tintern.—The Interior, Looking East.

GISBURGH AND BOLTON

WE have already seen something of the two greatest orders of monasticism; first, the Benedictine, sire of all others, founded by St. Benedict in the sixth century, the great power that not only saved the results of classical civilization to the world, but made of no avail the deluge of barbarism that swept over civilized Europe during the Dark Ages, and actually became the creative force that, more than any other single institution or movement, laid the foundations and guaranteed the development of that great epoch of Christian civilization that covered the mighty thousand years from the promulgation of the Rule of St. Benedict in the middle of the sixth century to the final suppression in England, A.D. 1539. The order that regenerated the Church, recreated civil society, and brought order out of chaos; that organized Christianity; that gave birth to Christian art, that gave to the Church some of its greatest saints, its most era-making bishops, and was at one time so

supreme in spiritual and temporal matters that it could boast thirty-seven thousand houses with, at the smallest computation, one million monks scattered over the entire known world — the order that civilized half of pagan Europe and won to Christ many of the lands now comprising the great powers of the earth.

Second, the Cistercian, the offshoot from the parent stem, the creation of St. Robert of Molesme, St. Stephen Harding, and St. Bernard of Clairvaux, the great order of righteousness and liberty that was the basic force in the revolts of the English people against royal tyranny and incapacity, and to which may be traced without exaggeration so much that is fundamental and enduring in the character of our race.

It is now time to turn for a moment to yet another order, technically independent of Benedictinism, yet actually dependent on it for its ultimate success, the Canons Regular of St. Augustine, who, though they did not appear in England until 1108, became almost more widely popular than any other order, boasting at the Suppression, one hundred and seventy houses, at which time the revenues of Gisburgh, the most powerful of all, were exceeded only by three houses in the Province of York. As from the Rule of St. Benedict many other move-

ments were derived, so from that called of St. Augustine grew several powerful and singularly beneficent offshots, Norbertines or Præmonstratensians, Gilbertines, the only strictly English order, and others. It was a peculiarly vital movement, and one which should be very illuminating and suggestive to us of the present time.

The monks of St. Benedict had at first withdrawn from a world at that time impossible; the revolt showed itself a little later among the secular clergy who still remained in the world and served the cathedrals and parish churches, retaining the cure of souls. The efforts amounted to little, so far as we can judge. Chrodegang, Archbishop of Metz, was the first to impose on his cathedral clergy a rule of life, with the customary vows, but without the obligation to manual labour. After the death of Chrodegang in 764, an effort was made to extend his rule to all secular clergy, but the attempt failed completely, and conditions reverted to their original bad estate. In 856 Amalarius, a canon of Metz, supported by Charlemagne's son, Louis the Pious, made another attempt in the same direction, with only a measure of success. The Council of the Lateran in 1509 took up the work, and finally Pope Alexander II. in 1063,

formally established the order of Regular Canons, which immediately took root in England in Lanfranc's church of St. Gregory in Canterbury, whence it spread all over the island kingdoms.

While known officially as canons, they were distinctly monks, not friars: they lived in community, observed the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and maintained the same life of constant prayer and devotion. On the other hand, the canons were all in priest's orders: they were not bound to manual labour; they were very directly under Episcopal control; they served in person all the parishes and chapels impropriated to them, and formed in a way a body of missionaries, upon whom the ordinary could call for specified service at any time. Even their great monastic churches were almost parochial, in that the canons were confined to the choir, while the nave was exclusively for the use of the laity. Their habit was simply that of the secular canons, cassock, cloak, and biretta of black, with a white surplice or rochet; the Præmonstratensians were clothed wholly in white, even to their birettas, and were called "White Canons" as the Augustinians were commonly known as the "Black Canons."

The hundred and seventy houses were thick

Gisburgh Abbey from the Garden.

in the eastern and central counties, but thinly placed in the north, the west, and in Wales. Many have become parish churches, as, for instance, Cirencester, Ipswich, and Dorchester — in which latter place one finds with grateful amazement much of the old order restored, with services as multitudinous and as rich in ceremonial as though three and a half centuries of darkness had not intervened between the old régime and the new. Two cathedrals only, Carlisle and Oxford, stand on Augustinian foundations, whilst the greatest houses of all have been utterly swept away, remaining only a vague memory, as in the case of the world-famous Osney in Oxford (the site of which is now consecrated to railway sidings and gasometers); or in the shape of an even more tantalizing hint, as at Gisburgh.

The fate of this great abbey is melancholy in the extreme. During its life of more than four centuries it was honourable above its fellows; it was distinguished in its birth, rich, powerful, and beneficent to an unusual degree, and as well one of the most noble examples of fourteenth century Gothic in all England. Exalted in its life, it was brought correspondingly low in death, being granted to the most profligate and evil of Crumwell's "visitors," Thomas

Legh, and by him transferred a little later to one Chaloner, who turned the ruins of one of the wonders of England into a stone quarry. It was once three hundred and eighty feet long, one hundred and seventy-five feet across the transepts, and seventy-five feet high to the crown of the vault. The monastic buildings reached out in every direction, covering several acres; there now remains the east wall of the choir, and nothing more of any kind whatever, except a few foundation stones in the velvet turf; not a shaft, not an arch, not a foot of wall, the east end rising against the sky like an architect's working drawing, preserved as a consequence of unwonted laziness or from some still less wonted dim apprehension of immortal beauty, a mighty and sorrowful decoration in a gentleman's pleasure garden.

Gisburgh was founded, A.D. 1129, by Robert de Brus, of Skelton, his wife Agnes, and his son Adam, at the instigation of Turstan, Archbishop of York. He was the eldest son of Robert de Brus, who came over with William the Norman, and brother to the founder of the Scottish house from which came Robert the Bruce. As was usually the case the monastery remained for generations under the protection and patronage of its founder's family, while it became the re-

cipient of constant favours from, and the chosen place of sepulture for, all the neighbouring nobility. Brus after Brus found interment within its walls, together with Percys, Nevils, Latymers, D'Arcys; and at the very end, during the ominous reign of Henry himself, a marvellous cenotaph in honour of the House of Brus, or Bruce, was erected here at the instance of Margaret Tudor, only to be crushed into fragments a few years later, and dispersed abroad, chiselled stones remaining to this day built up into the altar of the parish church, forming part of its pavement, or serving as makeshift building material in the walls of the same church porch.

From the beginning the abbey was overtaken by one disaster after another. What became of the first Norman buildings is unknown; the second, erected in the great central years of the thirteenth century, were burned in 1289, through the carelessness of a "vile plumber with a wicked disposition." The third church was completed about 1300, and again burned, but this time the fabric was so massive it resisted total destruction, and was rapidly rebuilt, 1320–1330, thereafter standing safe until a more devastating visitation than fire involved all in irreparable ruin.

This sequence of conflagrations, which is

typical of mediæval religious houses generally, shows very clearly the perils that beset the vast libraries and the innumerable works of art that were the pride of Christian civilization during the great thousand years. From the sixth century down, we read in record and chronicle stories of the noble libraries in even the smaller monasteries, that convey a somewhat different impression of "monkish ignorance and superstition" during the curiously misnamed "Dark Ages" to that acquired from the unscrupulous statements of special-pleader historians; and when we take into account the innumerable raids of barbarians, the assaults and spoliations of kings, and these same repeated conflagrations, we can only wonder that one mediæval manuscript has come down to us; yet, so constant was the industry of the monks, thousands of marvellous books, sacred and "profane," remained to fall a victim to the Lutherans in Germany, the Calvinists and Huguenots in France, and the brigands of our own country. Those who care for the evidences of the vast learning and the great multitude of books that overspread Europe during mediæval times have but to consult "The Monks of the West," by Montalembert; "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," by Dr. Gasquet; and, above all, Maitland's "Dark Ages," and

Gisburgh—A Ruined Sanctuary.

they will find a surplus of proof that books did exist before the invention of printing, and that the rebirth of learning and the Renaissance are by no means synonymous terms.

When the last building was completed, about 1330, the great fabric stood perhaps the most perfect example of fourteenth century architecture in Great Britain. The Black Death that followed so soon after gave a terrible and almost fatal blow to English civilization, and for a time art halted and fell back, but the years that saw Gisburgh (or Guisborough, as it is now written, with no show of authority whatever) grow into greatness — 1290–1330 — were years of culmination, and the all but vanished church was a fitting and adequate monument to the supremacy of a great epoch. The church was a complete and consistent design, cruciform, of course, with a central tower and two others at the western end; it was built of a rich, warm-coloured stone, hard and fine; vaulted throughout, and constructed with superb solidity and massiveness. It was classical in its majesty and simplicity, a masterpiece of the highest type of Gothic design, articulate, consistent, organic. A Gothic building is at its highest point of development as marvellous in its intricate simplicity, its logical organization and its co-ordina-

tion of parts, as man himself. Nowhere else in the range of human achievement is anything to be found which approaches such a church as this in sheer wonder of perfect finality, in absolute science linked with absolute beauty. Here stands a forlorn fragment of towering masonry, a shard saved from destruction, a handful of chiselled stones, compared with the mountain that has vanished; yet, so faultless is its art, we can almost reconstruct the perished wonder, proving the everlasting truth of the wise saying, "*Ex pede, Herculem.*"

There is no nobler example of pure and perfect proportion now existing than this: it is consummate in its balance, its mass, its relation of solids to voids, its marvellous sense of intimate relationship between a multiplicity of parts. And also it is so reserved, so self-contained, so reasonably contented with manly achievement, without the mad hunger for the almost impossible. There is no frenzy of dizzy vaults poised perilously in air at the mercy of a treacherous scaffolding of laborious flying buttresses: the arcade shafts are big enough to carry the piers that take the thrust of the vault conoids down to the point where the aisle vaults and their transverse walls transmit the thrust across the aisles to the outer buttresses. It is all sane,

scientific, self-contained, and at the same time vital with the loftiest and most crescent inspiration. In its decoration, also, it is just as reserved and high-bred. Carving of the richest appears where the need is insistent, but it is not lavished with prodigality, and every inch of it is delicate, exquisite, living.

Ralph of Glastonbury and William of Canterbury and all the other great builders of the old days whose names have perished, though from human records only, have their reward: the abbeys of Netley, Whitby, Tintern, Rievaulx, York, Gisburg, have followed in their course; and Gothic has become the full, sonorous, vibrant, and mobile language of Christian civilization.

It is not too much to say that the tragedy involved in the wilful slaughter of such a building as this is insupportable. There is little enough absolute beauty in the world, and such as there is is slowly passing away, with little of new offered to make good the loss. We are on the eve of a new epoch, a rediscovery of relative values, a new consciousness of the relation of religion to life, of the essential quality of art, and the connection eternally existing between it and religion and civilization. That which satisfied the last four centuries will not serve for us:

already the revolt is hot against the miserable changeling that has passed so long for the art of architecture. The old laws must be re-discovered, the old principles restored to life, but no studious monks have preserved for us through the true Dark Ages the memorials of a perished civilization. For generations the hand of every man was against these perfect records: hate and greed preyed on them at will, and later a foolish dilettanteism wrought even greater destruction under the guise of "restoration." Now, when we creep back to solve the problem of the essence of really great art, we are confronted by legends and traditions of wonders that once rose in fields, now vacant of any trace; by fabrics that endured through three centuries of scornful neglect, only to die at last by the paring and scraping and substitution of well-meaning restorers, or, perhaps, by ghosts like this of Gisburgh. In simple truth, the tragedy is unsupportable.

When we turn from this once majestic house and cross the moors of Yorkshire to that other Augustinian foundation in the valley of the Wharfe, we come upon a very different scene, confront a memorial of the past widely sundered in every way from the richest and most powerful of all Augustinian houses. Gisburgh was almost a principality, and we read how

Bolton—Prior Moon's Unfinished Tower.

"the Prior kept a most pompous house, insomuch that the towne, consystinge of five hundred householders, hade no lande, but lyved all on the Abbay." It maintained upwards of thirty parish churches at its own expense in England, as well as several in Scotland; at the Suppression its revenues were the equivalent of nearly $40,000 per annum, but Bolton was a little church and a little monastery hidden in the Yorkshire hills with, in its best estate, only some two hundred souls in its household as compared with the seven or eight hundred of Gisburgh, and an annual rent roll at the Suppression of but $12,000. Two centuries earlier, however, conditions were somewhat different, for in 1299 the annual income was more than $50,000, the cattle numbered seven hundred and thirteen, the sheep two thousand one hundred and ninety-three. It was at this time that the priory reached its height of material prosperity. The prior maintained his state on ample and magnificent lines. Besides himself and his eighteen or twenty canons, there were a few lay brothers, twenty or more men-at-arms, each with his body servant, twenty or thirty free servants in the house itself, and an hundred more on the many farms and granges, and finally bond-servants, twenty of whom were assigned to the

service of the prior. Among the free servants are enumerated in the Compotus, a master carpenter, two cooks, a brewer, a cellarer, a baker, a master smith, a chief forester, a bellman, a sackman, and *a physician!* It was really a great fedual community, bound together under the lordship of the prior. That the hundreds of tenants were mercifully and generously treated we know from contemporary records; that the household lived amply is proved by the authentic list of one year's provisions: *viz.*, 319 quarters of wheat flour, 112 quarters of barley meal, 80 quarters of oatmeal, 636 quarters of oats malted for ale, 64 oxen, 35 cows, 140 sheep, 69 pigs, 113 stone of butter, 4 quarters of fine flour for pastry, 147 stone of ewe's milk cheese, and, *mirabile dictu*, 1,800 gallons of wine! Of course we must bear in mind that all this vast quantity of food was not consumed by the two hundred members of the household alone: every monastery was an inn, a place of refuge, a centre for wide charity, and a place of entertainment for the nobles, knights, and ecclesiastics of the neighbourhood. Perhaps, after making due allowance for hospitality, we shall find that the above list does not prove so clearly as one might think the luxury and feasting so often and so carelessly attributed to the monastic orders. For instance,

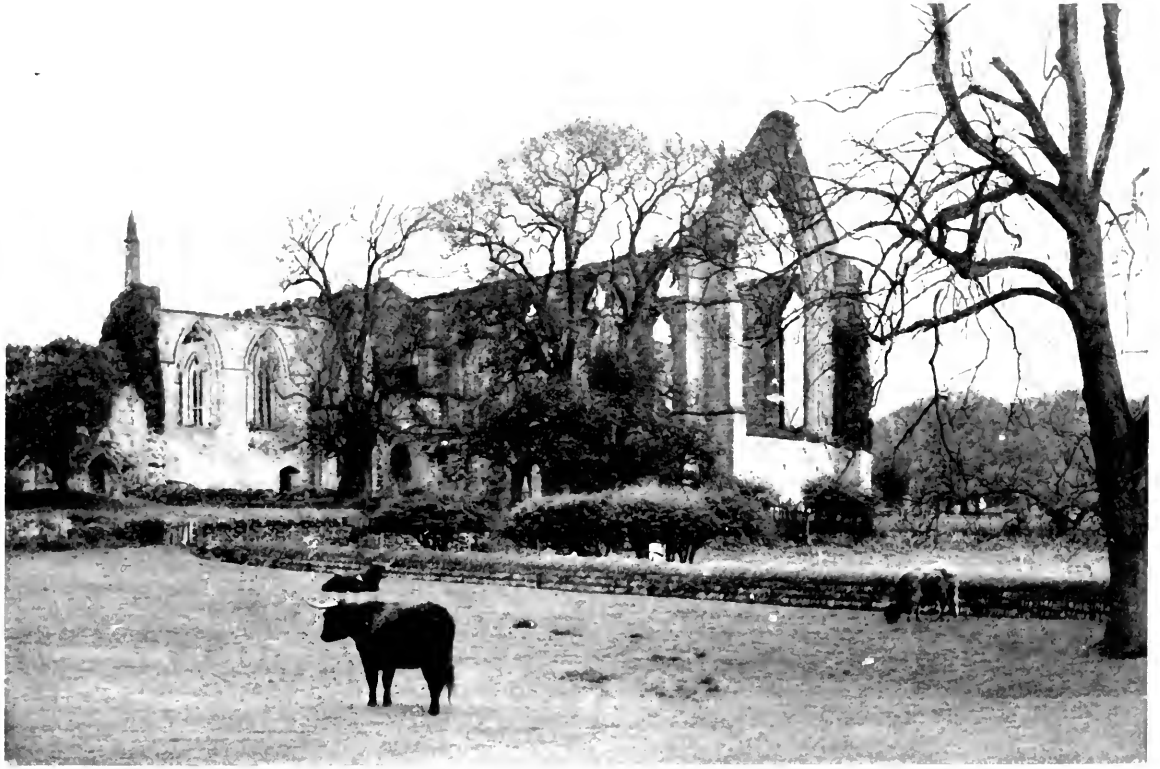
in 1303, when Bolton entertained Sir William de Hamelton with his huntsmen and hounds, twenty-two quarters of wheat were consumed by the visiting party alone; it is therefore quite safe to assume that hospitality answers in a large measure for the long lists of supplies annually consumed in any house.

In spite of its great wealth during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, however, the Canons of Bolton were never amongst those who cared much for great building. The ruins of the priory show a rather shapeless and casual structure, incorporating work of many centuries. The original church was a small cruciform building, Norman in style, and without aisles or tower. When in 1154 the house of Augustinian Canons that had been founded thirty years earlier at Embsay by William de Meschines and his wife Cecilia was translated to Bolton by their daughter Adeliza, in sorrowful memorial of her only son, "The Boy of Egremond," who had been drowned at the Strid, the extension and rebuilding of the old parish church began. Little by little it was patched up, added to, embellished; but no general rebuilding ever took place, for although the canons suffered constantly at the hands of Scottish invaders, the church was never wholly destroyed, and on the

day of dissolution in 1540 it still remained a thing of shreds and patches, strangely different to the princely Gisburgh, yet not without a certain homely charm as a living record of four centuries of varied history.

Even then, at that last day, scaffoldings enwrapped the west end of the church, and the air was full of the sound of mallet and chisel, for Prior Moon had begun in 1520 the erection of a fine new west tower which had already reached the level of the roof ridges — and has risen no higher since, still standing unfinished and even roofless, a stern reminder in the strength and delicacy of its design of the fact that architecture was even then a living thing and not a decaying artifice, as some have held in later times.

The fame of Bolton rests, not on its architecture, for it possesses little to boast of, if we judge it by mediæval standards, but rather on its wonderful situation, its environment of exquisite landscape, the pictorial quality of its ruins, and a little, perhaps, on the suggestion of its name, which arouses in our minds childish memory of a Landseer picture that once formed part of the decoration of every well-regulated dining-room some thirty or forty years ago. The long, aisleless choir is strong and fine in its proportions,



Bolton Abbey from the Site of the Prior's Lodgings.

poor Prior Moon's never-to-be finished tower is interesting as an evidence of the persistence of sound methods even to the end; but the few architectural excellencies of Bolton are matched and mastered almost anywhere else. One does not go there for the finding of great art, but for the sheer joy of an infinite succession of pictures, any one of which is worth a day's journey, particularly if by so doing one can get away from Leeds, which most fortunately can be easily accomplished.

The Yorkshire moors are a singular joy just here; the valley of the Wharfe is a miracle of loveliness; there is an inn close by which is a model of everything an English inn should be, and altogether Bolton is just the place to seek refuge in for a day or two, and refresh one's soul with a few dreams under monastic walls, a stroll through the luxuriant Wharfe valley, and a stiff climb up Greenhow Hill. But Saturdays and Bank Holidays are to be sedulously avoided; then every train brings troops of "trippers," each armed with a luncheon basket and a camera, and during their reign, life is an impossibility.

The site of Bolton is indeed ideal, and there is little wonder it makes its appeal even to the denizens of Bradford and Leeds. Just here

the tumbling Wharfe, cutting its way through the deep-forested hills, halts for rest in a wide intervale of meadow and clustered grove. Here, where the abrupt hills open out into a spacious amphitheatre, Bolton Priory rests on the last low headland just over the little river, backed by terraced verdure, fronted by golden meadows basking in the sun. It is a place of infinite peace (barring the Bank Holiday "trippers"), for in itself it is like a glen in Avalon, while it has been spared the new environment of mills, tenements, or trade that makes Kirkstall, Glastonbury, and even Netley impulses, not only to useless regrets but to disquieting mental contrasts and uncomfortable queries as to the eternal validity of established standards.

From any point of view, the modest ruins take on a certain dignity and even grandeur, lifting as they do with such invincible self-respect above the deep turf, the great leaning trees, and the rippling river, that, daunted for the moment by a sturdy weir, pauses in its course to mirror the tall sanctuary. Even more beautiful are the glimpses one gains through crumbling doorways and vacant arches of long, sloping sward, still clumps of heavy trees, and far, wide meadows bright with flowers and sun.

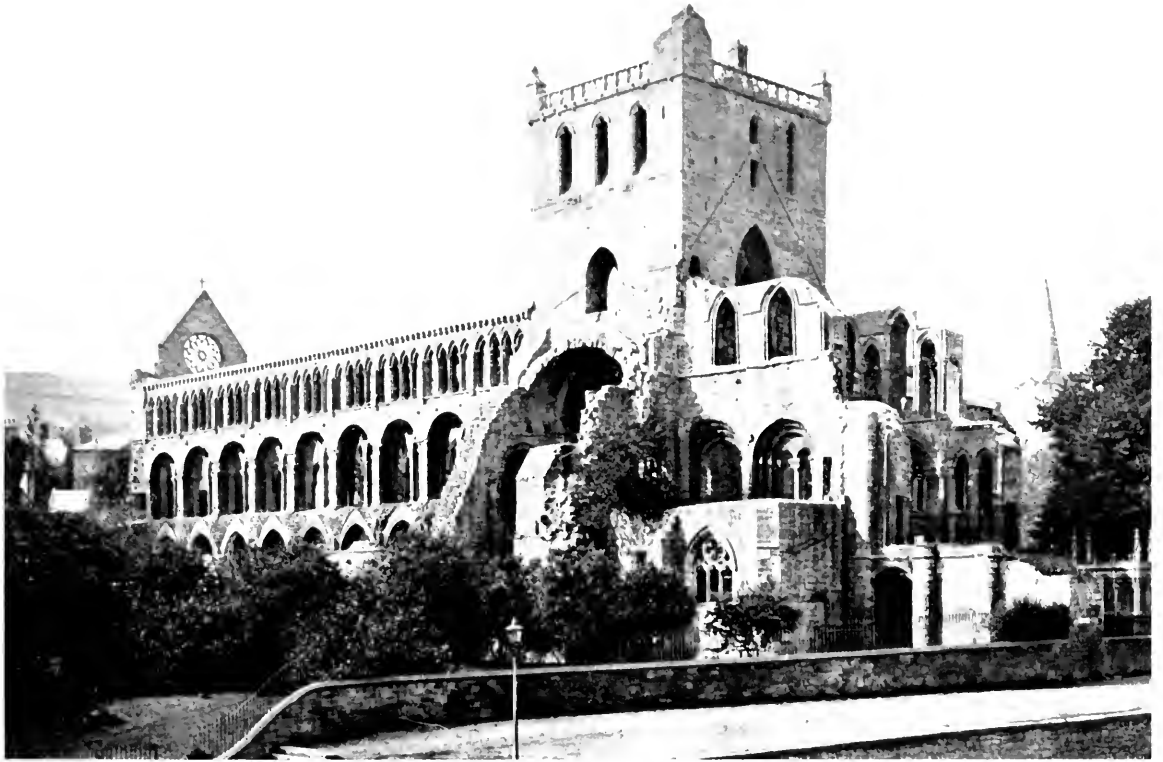
Insignificant though the church most surely

is, the whole group must have been impressive and convincing, for the wide-spread buildings around the cloister and the base court, the prior's lodging and garden to the east and on the brink of the river, the infirmary away to the south, with the guest house near by, the great gateway (now a part of the Duke of Devonshire's shooting box) well to the west, together with barns, granaries, stables, brew houses, and all the multitude of farm buildings, formed a wonderful group, covering many acres. It was indeed a great feudal establishment, a self-centred community, tied together by the widely sundered motives of religious faith and personal well-being, one of those patriarchal households that did so infinitely much to develop the sterling character of the race and the agricultural and industrial stability of the nation.

JEDBURGH AND KELSO

IN that debatable border-country of the Scottish Lowlands, the most northerly portion of the ancient kingdom of Cumbria, where "Tweed's fair river, broad and deep," winds slowly down to Berwick and the sea, stands all that English rage and Scottish ruffianry have left of four great abbeys, all owing their foundation to a king and the son of a king, a saint and the son of a saint.

Before William the Norman invaded Scotland and wrung a lagging homage from King Malcolm Canmore, this was surely a wild and barbarous country. About the middle of the ninth century, the region about Jedburgh came into the possession of the see of Lindisfarne, and under Bishop Ecgred a church was established here. A century later Cumbria became a feof of the English kings, and was held of them by the King of Scots, the first instance in history when this relationship was established. When Alexander I. succeeded to the throne, his brother David became Prince of Cumbria, being the



Jedburgh—The Wreck of Glory.

last to bear that title. Already a man of deep piety and powerful character, softened and civilized by his sojourn at the English court, where he had gone with his sister Matilda on her marriage with Henry I., he showed himself a worthy son of Malcolm Canmore and St. Margaret, and set about the progressive civilization of his principality, re-establishing the bishopric of Glasgow, severing Teviotdale from the diocese of Durham, and loyally carrying out the reform of the Church instituted by his royal parents. At the instigation of his old friend and teacher, John, whom he had made Bishop of Glasgow, he established in Jedburgh about 1118 a house of Canons Regular of St. Augustine; he had already founded at Selkirk, a house of Tironensian monks, who four years after his coronation were to be transferred to Kelso. Dryburgh was not to follow until 1150, and even then was to owe its existence technically to Lord Lauderdale, Constable of Scotland, though there is little doubt that St. David was the moving spirit in the project, as he proved its most munificent benefactor and patron. Besides the abbeys already named, the same saintly monarch founded the Augustinian houses of Holyrood, and Cambuskenneth in Sterling, the Cistercian Kinloss, Newbattle and many other monasteries,

while the Knights Templar and Knights of St. John of Jerusalem came into the kingdom at his call. As James I. of Scots said of him, he was indeed "sair saunct for the croon!"

At first a simple priory, Jedburgh was in the year 1147 raised to the dignity of an abbey under Osbert as first Abbot, a man of notable learning and great piety. Thenceforward the abbots of Jedburgh were to hold a place of exceptional dignity in the kingdom. Nicholas (1255) was a member of the Royal Council and one of the excommunicators of the traitorous guardians of the youthful Alexander III.; later he was an ambassador of the same king to Edward III., then a prisoner of the Earl of Leicester. John (1275) was Abbot when Alexander married Yolande de Dreux in Jedburgh Abbey, chosen for this purpose on account of its great dignity and the exceptional beauty of the surrounding country; later he also was an ambassador to England anent the conflicting claims of Bruce and Baliol to the Scottish Crown on the death without issue of Alexander III. John II. (1338) was one of those who arranged the treaty with England in 1342 for the settling of the Border question. Robert III., his successor, was also an envoy to England, as were Robert IV. (1473) and Thomas II. (1494).

Under James V. began the fatal custom of appointing "commendatory abbots" — a vicious and sacrilegious practice borrowed from the continent, where it was the prime cause of the degradation of monasticism and its final fall. "The result of this *commende* was to bestow this title of abbot, with the greater part of the revenues of a monastery, upon ecclesiastics who were strangers to monastic life, and too often upon simple laymen, provided they were not married. It inflicted thus a deep and radical taint to these institutions. . . . For the partial irregularities which, especially in houses not directly subject to the influence of the great feudal families, had followed elections, the direct nominations of the kings, established by the Concordat of 1516, substituted a criminal, radical and incurable disorder. The title of abbot, borne and distinguished by so many saints, so many doctors, so many illustrious pontiffs, fell into the mire. Neither residence, nor any of the duties of the religious life were any longer compulsory. It was nothing more than a lucrative sinecure, which the Crown disposed of at its pleasure, or at the pleasure of its ministers, and too often to the profit of the most unworthy passions or interests. . . . Let us imagine to ourselves what could become in most

of these monasteries, despoiled of their most essential prerogatives, of the true motives of their existence, and metamorphosed into farms belonging to strangers, of some five or six unhappy monks, abandoned to themselves and overwhelmed under the weight of their past glory and their present debasement. Can we wonder at the progress of corruption, of spiritual and intellectual decline? . . . Under the influence of all these united causes, the monastic institution hastened more and more to complete decay. . . . Is it needful to ascertain further the depth of their fall or to explain the true cause of their ruin?"*

It is sometimes urged in extenuation of Henry's course in England that monasticism there had become a foul canker in the body politic, and that it did not owe an untimely destruction to the peculiar personality of Henry himself, since in France, Italy, Spain, Germany, it also was destroyed and under other sovereigns. In this ruinous "*commende*" however, we find the true cause of the continental suppressions, in a custom evolved by absolutism to insure its own persistence after it had destroyed the very real liberty and freedom that had existed under the feudalism and limited monarchies of the

*Montalembert; "The Monks of the West."

Jedburgh Abbey as seen from the river.

Middle Ages. The *commende* never obtained in England, and when Henry struck at monasticism, the blow fell on an institution not yet weakened and vitiated by any such cause as on the continent and in Scotland, sapped the life out of it, and left no reason for its continued existence in its unhappy and degenerate estate.

John Home, brother to the Great Chamberlain of Scotland, was the first of the commendatory abbots of Jedburgh. His nature may be read from a charter under the Great Seal granted in 1549 to John, Alexander, and Matthew Home, "bastardis filiis naturalibus reverendi in Christo patris Johannis de Jedburgh abbatis," which charter was followed by another of similar tenour in 1572. Andrew Home, nephew of this worthy successor of a long line of saintly men, was the next commendatory and the last of those who bore the title of Abbot of Jedburgh. He assumed the title in 1560. "Foreseeing that the abolition of his abbey was imminent, the commendator, like the abbots and commendators of similar establishments, made over the lands, etc., belonging to the monastery to his chief, or rather to his own mother, who was the widow of George, fourth Lord Home, and on the death of Lady Home he made a new grant of

the lands of the abbey in favour of his nephew Alexander."*

Title to all the estates of the once glorious abbey was confirmed in 1606; when Lord Home became an earl they were erected into a barony called of Coldingham, and the Augustinian foundation of St. David, the mighty abbey of Jedburgh, gave place to "The Earl of Home, Baron of Coldingham and Lord of Jedburgh and Dunglas."

Better a thousand times would it have been had Scottish monasticism vanished in blood and fire and spoliation, together with that of England, rather than it should have continued as it did for another fifty years, until the royal successors of the sainted sovereign who had brought it into being had made of it an hateful thing of shreds and patches, only to be utterly wiped out in scorn and contempt, when it had at last been done to death by profligate commendators.

Lying as it did in the track of every army that crossed the border from either side, Jedburgh was sacked and burned by the English again and again: in 1297 by Sir Richard Hastings, in 1464 by the Earl of Warwick, in 1523 by the Earl of Surrey, and, "last stage of all,"

*James Watson: "Jedburgh Abbey."

by Lord Eure in 1544, serving under the Earl of Hertford, who had been sent by his royal master to kill, burn, and destroy in revenge for the refusal of Cardinal Beaton to sell Scotland under the flimsy guise of an alliance between Prince Edward and Queen Mary, then a child of a year or two. Hertford truly reported that Jedburgh had been "well brent," and that they had "put to the fyre, and left not past two houses unbrent in the same; the abbey likewise they burned as much as they might for the stonework." One good deed is recorded for the commendator John Home, otherwise of evil memory; he restored the burned abbey to such good effect that eight years later, in 1552, when in the very last days of the debauched Church, David Panter, commendator of Cambuskenneth, was "consecrated" Bishop of Ross, the sacrilegious ceremony took place within its walls "with great triumph and banquetting," which we may well believe, if we accept Buchanan's statement that he lived as if he had been trained in the school of profligacy, not of piety. Strange contrast with that other great ceremony in Jedburgh, the marriage of the good King Alexander III., three hundred years before. Was it in prophecy of this miserable end to glory and wide beneficence that the wedding feast ended

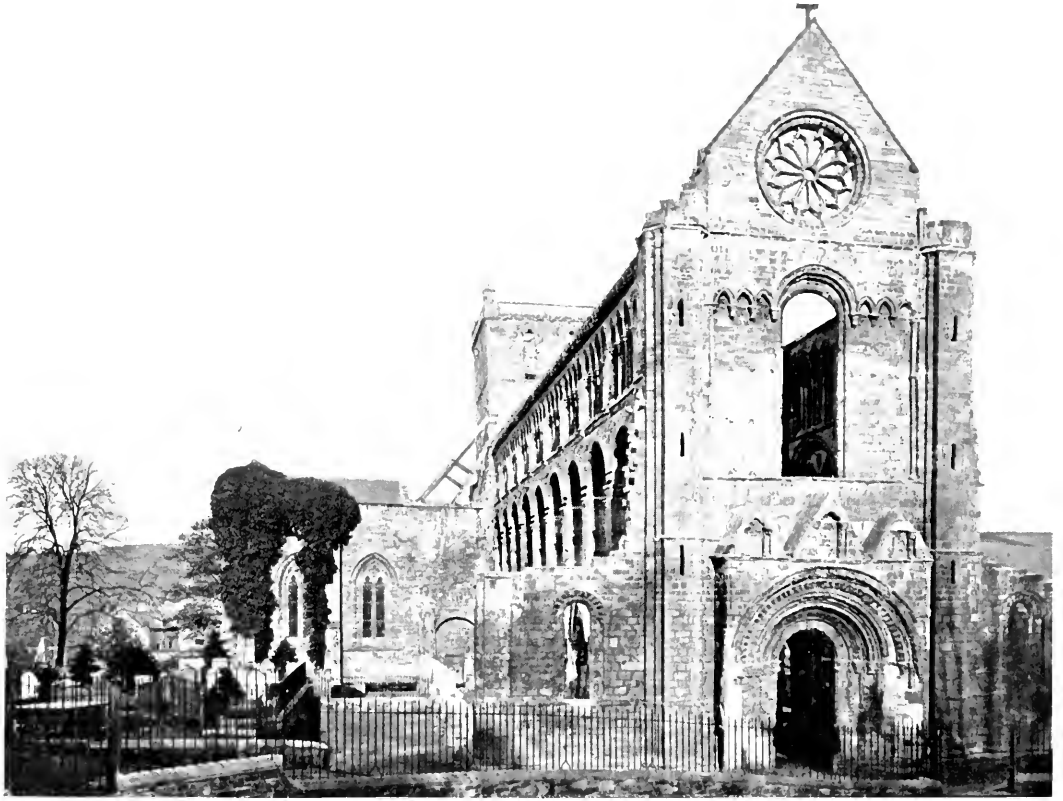
as it did? Here is the legend. After the wedding, and at night, in the great hall of the abbey, before the king and queen and half the nobility and knighthood of the land, was held a great pageant, a masque of religious and domestic virtues, of music and the arts, of military and knightly valour. Suddenly, at the end of the long procession was seen a grizzly apparition:

> "Namely, a mere anatomy, quite bare
> His naked limbs, both without flesh and hair,
> (As we decipher Death) who stalks about
> Keeping true measure till the dance be out.
> The King with all the rest affrighted stand:
> The spectre vanished, and then strict command
> Was given to break up revels, each 'gan fear
> The other, and presage disaster near."*

From St. David and Alexander III. to James V. and commendatory John Home, from the founding of abbeys and the building of triumphs of consummate art to the sale and mortgage and final burning and perfect destruction thereof, cause indeed for the coming at the end of the magical masque of a ghastly portent "as we decipher Death."

During the terrible anarchy that followed the death of James V. the abbey, now taken over for parochial purposes by the Presbyterians,

* Heywood: "Hierarchie of the Blessed Angels."



The West Front of Jedburgh Abbey.

fell steadily into decay. Commendator John Home's reparations could have been none too thorough, for twenty years after we learn that the great church "is presentlie consumit and decayit in the rufe and timmer thairof and within short process of tyme will all uterlie decay and fall doun gif tymous remeid be not prouidit thairto." Wherefore it was urged that certain of the conventual buildings be torn down to furnish "timmer," which was done. Yet there was more dead in Scotland than the church roofs. Little by little those fell at Jedburgh; columns collapsed, walls were thrown down to furnish patchwork materials. The parish church shrunk smaller and smaller. Now one part of the venerable ruin was roughly closed in to form a kirk, now another. Finally five bays at the west of the nave were enough, and this in spite of the fact that one aisle was excluded from the makeshift walls; the great roof had long since gone, and now another was introduced at the triforium level, above which towered the forlorn clerestory, gaunt and toppling. This last affair must have been a dismal place within; all the stone was covered with plaster, the windows filled with plain sashes of common glass set in wood mutins, deal galleries hung on the walls, and the floor area was divided up into small

pens five and a half feet square. "It was arranged that four of the seats in the middle of the church were to be movable, in order that at the time of the sacrament a double row of tables might be set, one along these seats, and one along the area opposite with a passage for the elders along one side of each." The "decoration" consisted in the Commandments and Creed painted on the plaster at the east end, and a painted text of Scripture over each column.

The history of this time is as forlorn as the new kirk, of which the frequenters were probably very proud during the eighteenth century. It is a long chronicle of fights over the ownership of cloister, refectory, mills, barns, and lands; of lawsuits, bickerings, and even murders; of heart burnings and recriminations as to who should be buried where and whose pew should be in one place, when another claimed the right as his own. The Laird of Hunthill submits to the presbytery "ane bill compleaning he was wronged in his seat in the kirk and desyring that he be not wronged"; the magistrates and heritors find that "the Marquess of Douglass and his tenants were to sit betwixt the pillar on the west of the pulpit according to his valuation, and the rest of that place for Lanton and the tenants there"; "Madder's lands having been found to

extend to about half the whole valuation of Lanton, had assigned to them two pews immediately behind Sir John Rutherford's seat, each seat extending in length from pillar to pillar, and breadth two feet two inches, a free entry to be through this locality to Sir John Rutherford's seat. The ground immediately behind Madder's back seat was given to Alexander Ferguson, to the end that he might erect a half seat there. The Duke of Buccleuch was to have a seat extending from the wall on the east side of the meikle kirk door to the entry that led into Cavers Carr's seat, keeping always within the general locality of Lanton."

But enough of the canny but pitifully sordid squabbling that dragged its crass way through almost three centuries. An end came, so far as the poor old abbey was concerned, in 1875, when the Marquess of Lothian, unable to endure further the degradation of a great and reverend monument, bribed the occupants to get out, by building for them a fine new kirk "in the Early English style of Architecture." Since then the house of Lothian has done everything possible to redeem the trembling ruins: the lath and plaster kirk has been eradicated, the stones purged of their whitewash, fallen stones replaced in position, piers strengthened, walls protected,

débris removed, and here and there low walls added to give a clear idea of the former lines of the great church. The ruins now stand, dignified, solemn, self-respecting, and secure; the real "dark ages" for Jedburgh Abbey have passed away.

Architecturally, we could have spared many churches before Jedburgh, and it is a notable mercy that so much has been preserved from the fell hands of "heritors" and presbyteries, and finally that the precious remains should have fallen at last into the honourable custody of such as the Marquesses of Lothian. There are many minor joys as well: a model history of the abbey by James Watson; good photographs to be had for small prices; last, but not least, an old custodian who is a perennial and ever-new delight. Jedburgh at last has fallen on gentle days.

As the ruins now stand, they show admirably the sequence and growth of style in the North. The first church of St. David's time consisted of a crossing with transepts, a choir of two bays, terminated by a semicircular apse and possibly a short nave of two or three bays, as at Kelso. Later by about a century, the apse was removed and the choir extended by three bays, with a square termination, while the short nave gave

Jedburgh—The Cloister Door.

place to a most noble structure of nine bays, one hundred and thirty feet in length. About a century later still, the north transept was greatly extended, so we have here examples of three definite periods, the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. Of the rehabilitation that came after the burning of the abbey by Warwick, nothing exists except, perhaps, the exquisite tracery of the south chapel window. The early Norman work is powerful, original, deeply interesting; far more French in its connotation than the contemporary English work. This is also true of the transitional nave, and as a matter of fact, French influence is everywhere visible in Scottish architecture from the earliest times to the end; a state of things that one would quite expect to find in view of the close and constant connection between the two kingdoms. The almost complete destruction of the thirteenth century sanctuary is deeply to be regretted, the portions that remain being singularly spontaneous, poetic, and vital. The nave is wholly admirable, a powerful arcade of clustered shafts with clean-cut, vigorous capitals and fine, strong arches, a singularly classical and delicate triforium and a clerestory still more sensitive and glittering. From pavement to roof one may mark the transition from Nor-

man to the full-blown style of the thirteenth century, keeping steady pace with the progress of the work. The square abacus, the square contours of the arch arisses, the contours of the pier sections, all testify to French, not English influence. The nave was never vaulted, nor was this ever contemplated, therefore division into bays does not exist, and the main lines of the design are horizontal. It is interesting to note in the west end an almost complete return to the round arch and the characteristic ornament of a century before. Some have supposed that the west door was removed to its new position from the ancient church, but it seems to me that if it is compared with the unquestioned twelfth century monk's door to the cloisters, it will appear as once as a copy, not an original. It is lacking in the vigour, the brilliancy and the power of the latter work, and is undoubtedly therefore, an essay in imitation by masons who had outgrown the older style and, while acquiring something far finer, had been unable to think back into the terms of a previous age.

Of the conventual buildings, nothing is known. One may indulge in conjecture, no more. Reformation "squatters," respectable robbers, and careless presbyteries have destroyed the last trace of the great group of buildings that once

dropped in terraces down to the lovely river. Everything is gone, except here and there a foundation stone. The great cloister is now a beautiful garden, but the site of chapter house, refectory, fratry, and abbot's lodgings is blocked by hideous houses of the last century, or swept clean to the turf itself.

Kelso, once the richest and most powerful of all the monastic houses in Scotland, has suffered more grievously than Jedburgh. Wholly destroyed by Henry's scourge, the Earl of Hertford, the ruins were turned into a barracks, then divided between a prison and a covenanter meeting house, and finally, so far as the great choir is concerned, razed to the ground and given over to secular purposes, while, following the fashion of the time, the local gentry quarrelled for privilege of sepulture and the raising of cheerful headstones within the dismantled walls and the confines of the close. No Marquess of Lothian has come to guard the wreck with jealous care, no historian to organize the annals of a house, the abbot of which once claimed priority before the Bishop of St. Andrews himself: the gaunt walls are jostled by crowding houses, paved streets cut through close and graveyard, and a most unhandsome village has circled the august wreck with prison walls.

Fortunately, the most important part of the abbey, speaking architecturally, the nave, crossing, and transepts, still remains, with two walls of the central tower. This is most fortunate, for so we can gain a good idea of a very unusual type of design, the castellated church of the Border as it was in the twelfth century. Kelso is unique and priceless. Apart from the extraordinary naveless type, the design is consummately interesting, for it is of a powerful and majestic late Norman, vigorous and masterly. Nave and transepts were about of the same length; the huge tower rose from their intersection, and therefore tells for its full value, while the great masses of the three projections buttress it perfectly and build up into a great and awe-inspiring mass. It is Roman in its grave and self-restrained majesty, a masterpiece of splendid and competent design. Within it is almost startlingly rich and supple for the period. All the arcade and wall arches are round, those of the crossing slightly pointed. The walls to the west are piled up of range over range of arched motives, those of the choir consist in great low arches on powerful piers, surmounted by a kind of triforium gallery of delicate shafts supporting an unbroken sequence of semicircular arches with, for clerestory, a modification of the same

Kelso—A Feudal Sanctuary.

scheme. There is something almost of the South in this fragment of choir, something of North France in the transepts, something even of the legendary Saxon in the much bepraised north portal; altogether a supremely interesting building, well deserving of a happier fate.

Kelso was founded by St. David in 1128, who then established there a house of Tironensian monks, an offshoot of the Cistercian order most unfamiliar in Great Britain. It was primarily almost a labouring order. Hard work and plenty of it was the founder's safeguard against temptation. Every monk was a workman, a labourer. Some were husbandmen, some carpenters, some stone-cutters and masons, while others, who were not fitted for such arduous tasks, were diligent illuminators. The fame of Kelso, in this last direction, spread over the entire kingdom. Through the enormous industry of these monks and the universal respect they inspired, whereby they benefited by a long series of bequests, Kelso became possessed of vast estates reaching down into Northumberland, and north as far as Aberdeen. At the very end, after the English had destroyed the abbey, and the monks, dispossessed, had been driven forth to subsist on the charity of other houses, the revenues of the lands alone, perhaps half of which

had already been alienated, were estimated at nearly four thousand pounds Scots, or over twenty-two thousand dollars of our own time.

The siege and reduction of Kelso Abbey by the Earl of Hertford in 1545 is one of the fine, fierce tales of the Border. Churchmen and townspeople held the close for a long time against the bombardment of Hertford's artillery and the repeated assaults of his infantry. Breached by cannon, the close became untenable, and for a while the defenders fought off one attack after another, retreating through the conventual buildings until they made their last stand in the church itself. Once more the artillery, now at close range, made a breach in the sacred walls, but none came forward to the final assault, until Hertford offered a reward to any who would volunteer. At last a band of Spanish mercenaries yielded to the bribe, scaled the walls, obtained a lodgment, drove back the handful of defenders, and cleared a way for the more cautious English, who now poured into the desecrated sanctuary and put all to the sword, except two or three monks, who retreated to the topmost platform of the tower, which they held all night, killing every man who ventured up the winding stone stairway. It is one of the joys of history to know that, in some way or other,

this handful of doughty monks and splendid patriots managed to escape at dawn and make their way to safety in the North.

This was of course the end of the abbey. For a time it served as a barracks, a part of the covenanting army being quartered there after it had treacherously sold its king to the Parliamentary forces of England in 1647. In 1699 a portion of the ruin was enclosed, as at Jedburgh and for the same purpose, except that the ramshackle structure continued "a double debt to pay," the loft being used as a common prison. In 1760 a part of the aisle vault fell during a service in the kirk, which so frightened the people, who bore in mind an old prophecy of Thomas the Rhymer, that they abandoned the place forthwith and erected for themselves a fine new kirk, more consonant with the enlightened times in which they lived, later pronounced by one carping critic to be "without exception the ugliest and least suitable in its architecture of all the parish churches in Scotland — and that is saying a good deal — but it is an excellent model for a circus." Last of all, the abbot and monks were succeeded by a firm of manufacturers of threshing machines, who were ousted in 1805 and the place purged of its many miserable accretions. In the mean-

time every trace of conventual buildings had disappeared, the materials going to the erection of the town hall and other public and private works; the great gardens and orchards of the abbey had become the paved and desolate market place that now rejoices the eye — the market place where in "the Fifteen" James III. and VIII. was proclaimed King of Great Britain, Ireland, and France. The "Dark Ages" were at an end, and bell and prayers and chanting, learning, industry, and mercy had yielded place to kirk, prison, and wheelwright, and to that foul emanation of the eighteenth century, the "Holy Matin Club" of infamous memory. The Renaissance and Reformation had conquered mediævalism at last.

In the Cloister-Garth of Kelso.

RIEVAULX AND BYLAND

OF the Cistercian houses in the south we have already seen something in Beaulieu, Netley, and Tintern; but the chief of all was far to the north in that cradle of monasticism, Yorkshire, surrounded by a cluster of the noblest examples of architecture England could boast. Rievaulx, Byland, Fountains, Jervaulx, Kirkstall, Roche, what an epic of monastic grandeur the names evolve. Meaux and Sawley, two other Cistercian foundations, are almost forgotten, whilst all trace of them has been practically obliterated; yet we do not need them, for the sextet of greater houses is sufficient in itself. Each was as different to the other as a Cistercian church could be, and each marked some noble stage in the development of Gothic in England.

It was in the reign of Henry I. and in the year 1131 that Rievaulx, premier abbey of all the Cistercian foundations, was established by Walter l'Espec, a noble Norman, and a great soldier. Aelred, abbot of Rievaulx and third in the line of thirty-three incumbents, writes of

him as "an old man and full of days, quick-witted, prudent in council, moderate in peace, circumspect in war, a true friend and a loyal subject. His stature was passing tall, . . . his hair was still black, his beard long and flowing, his forehead wide and noble, his eyes large and bright, his face broad, but well featured, his voice like the sound of a trumpet, setting off his natural eloquence of speech with a certain majesty of sound." A fine pen-portrait of a most commanding personality. As is quaintly recorded by Dugdale: "The aforesaid Walter l'Espec had a Son, call'd also Walter, who having unfortunately broken his Neck, by a Fall from his Horse, his Father resolv'd to make *Christ* Heir of Part of his Lands, and accordingly founded three Monasteries." Rievaulx was the third of these communities that owed their existence to the piety and grief of a sorrowful old man; and its establishment, at the suggestion of the great Archbishop Turstan, of York, was placed in the hands of certain monks sent over from Clairvaux by St. Bernard himself.

Naturally the fact that the first monks of Rievaulx were personal friends of the great saint gave the house a singular distinction, which it retained until the end. Chief of all the Cistercians in England the Abbot of Rie-

vaulx not only supervised the whole order in the islands, but he was as well constantly called to act as arbitrator in ecclesiastical, monastic, and civil disputes. As was always the case, the abbey was under the constant patronage of the neighbouring nobility, and many of them were buried within its walls. First of these was the venerable founder, who, "an old man and full of days," finally took the cowl, spending the last few years of his noble and strenuous life as a monk in the peace and rest of the cloister he had built, and, dying on March 9, 1153, was buried at the door of the chapter house, where he still sleeps beneath a mound of grass-grown ruins hurled down in futile fury by the destroyers of that which manly piety had wrought.

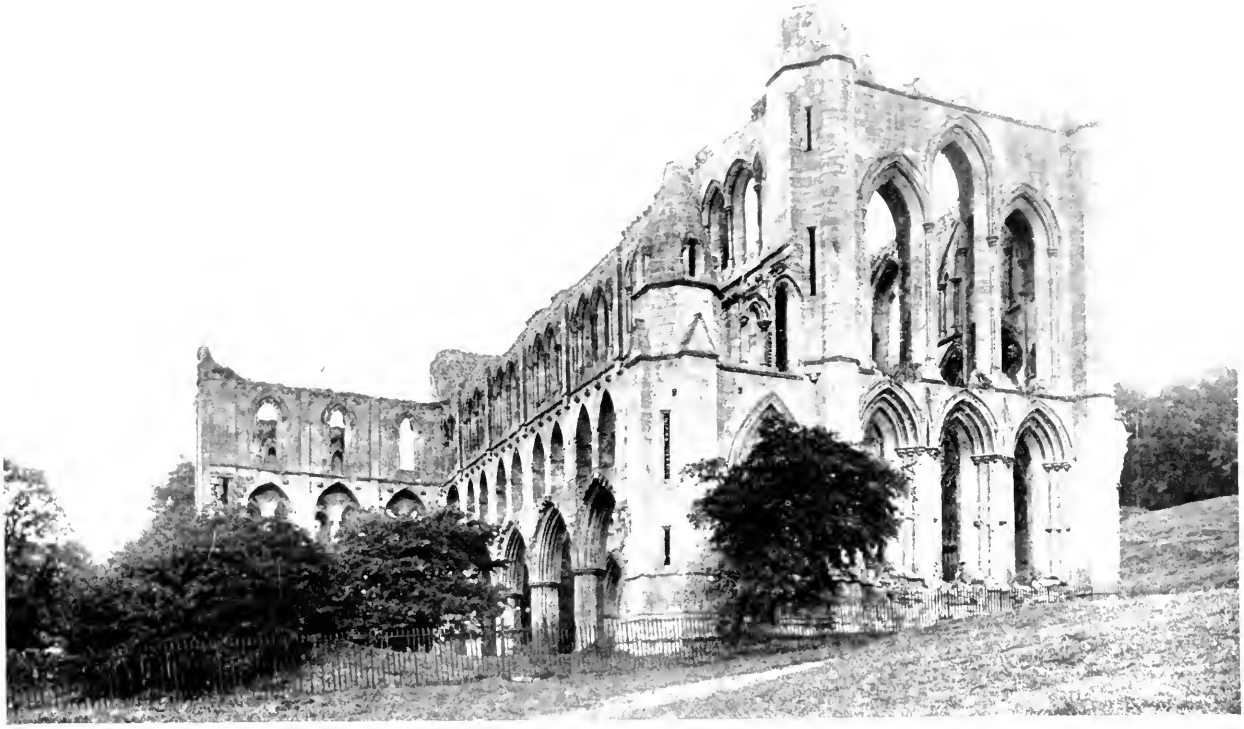
Very far away from any line of ordinary travel, hidden in a deep glen of the Yorkshire moors, forgotten of all but archæologists and architectural pilgrims, Rievaulx still remains the most typical and perfect ruin of monastic England. One leaves the train at the little market town of Helmsley, where the red crags of Helmsley castle lift above great elms blotted by busy rookeries. The castle itself is full of historical interest, for "Helmsley, once proud Buckingham's delight," had fallen finally into the hands of that engaging knave who served his king so

well and yet so ill, dying at last by the dagger of Felton in 1628. Sixteen years later Colonel Crossland, a fine, brave type of Cavalier, held it against great odds, while Fairfax battered it from every side, finally reducing it to ruin and compelling the surrender of the little garrison of two hundred men.

The road thence to Rievaulx climbs up and up some three or four miles over the swelling moors, and at last on the height of land a breakneck path drops down into thick forest. Winding back and forth, it leads deep down through a cleft in the hills; a squalid village brings it to an end, and, of a sudden, to the left lift the splendid ruins, held close in the vise of parallel lines of terraced hills that fall away to the east, where the Rye valley opens out into a wide meadow, basking in the sun.

A lovelier and more sheltered haven one could not find: the great hills shut off all ungentle winds, and the valley lies like an eddy of still water in the turbulent course of some mountain torrent. As one stands within the glorious choir, the sky is hardly visible through any arch or window, only a curtain of living green turf and luxuriant trees: the whole place is the apotheosis of earthly and spiritual calm.

I have called Rievaulx a perfect ruin; and so



Rievaulx Abbey.

it is, for since the day when the destroyers drew away from the deadly wreck their hands had wrought, the dead past has been left to bury its dead. Daily one stone after another has loosened and dropped to earth, the merciful ivy has crept higher and higher in vain effort to stay the slow dissolution, trees have sprung up, waxed great, perished, and given place to their successors. Early in the last century the choir and transepts were cleared down to the pavement level, but this is the only evidence of man's care in the space of two and a half centuries, during which the bells of Rievaulx have been silent in the valley of the Rye.

Of the once great church nothing now remains but the interior arcades and walls of the choir (the aisle walls have wholly vanished) and the transepts: the nave is nothing but a mountain range of débris, green with grass and great trees. The walls of the refectory still stand, as do some of those of the dormitory, though these latter are falling daily; beyond lies a dark and wonderful court choked with fallen masonry and thick with trees: this was the quadrangle of the abbot's lodgings; and the last remains of this great building still stand in part as they were left after the destruction of the house at the time of the Great Rebellion, for it is evident

that, as so often happened, this portion of the house was transmuted into a secular dwelling and served as such for the century between the Suppression and the Civil Wars.

If Whitby is a gnawing temptation to the archæologist and architect as a field for research, Rievaulx is ten times greater in the same direction. Beneath these huge green mounds lie the solutions of many problems, the possibility of much artistic treasure-trove. The utter wilderness of the monastic buildings is so weirdly beautiful that he would be a brave man who would lay hands thereon; but this is not true of the nave of the church, which is piled twenty feet high with grass-grown wreck. Here one hungers to dig and clear away, tracing the lines of walls and arcades, opening up a level view from west to east, sweeping away the pig styes and hen roosts that cumber the walls, and laying bare once more the form of the great church in all its integrity.

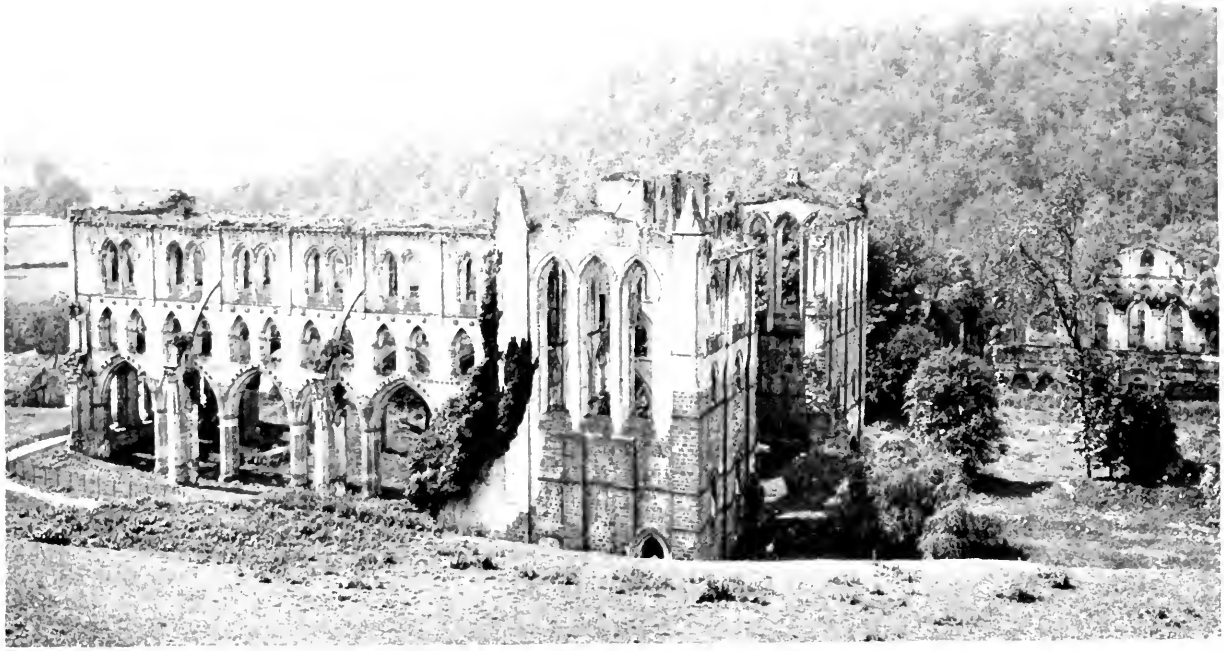
It is an open secret that some years ago the papers were all prepared, restoring after three and a half centuries, the venerable and sacred ruins to monastic hands. The papers were never signed, but they still may be, and some day Rievaulx may fall again into the keeping of religious, who have at last become a part of

the revivified Anglican Church; then will be the time for further investigation and rehabilitation: the glorious choir may be again roofed in, closed by new aisle walls, consecrated once more to the service of God, and again may the bells of Rievaulx be heard among the waiting hills and over the patient fields. "A consummation devoutly to be wished" indeed; and, if accomplished, perhaps only the first of a sequence of acts of restitution that, even if they rob the tourist of certain beautiful goals, will do something toward wiping out a terrible stain and building up on earth new "cities of God."

The architectural glory of Rievaulx lies in its wonderful choir, which, but for its vaulting and its aisle walls, has been mercifully preserved intact. Originally three hundred and forty-three feet long, the church has, as I have said, been reduced to choir and transepts, the entire nave having fallen into mountainous ruin. The lower portions of the transepts are Norman in date, and probably belong to Sir Walter's first church, as did as well (though of this we cannot be sure as yet) the vanished nave. The original "eastern" termination was unquestionably of the established Cistercian type, aisleless, short, and flanked by transept chapels. About 1230 the Puritanical rigidity of St. Bernard's archi-

tectural principles having been relaxed, and the rival Byland only a few miles away having dared to erect a true Benedictine choir with aisles and eastern "processional path," Rievaulx, not to be outdone in splendour by a junior house, determined to build a greater choir still, which was done forthwith, and the work was finished, so Sharpe says, and none could know better than he, not later than 1240. Byland was outdone, and almost all the other monasteries of England as well, for Rievaulx choir is one of the very noblest examples of English Gothic existing to-day. It is one hundred and forty-four feet long, and thirty feet wide from wall to wall; to the crown of the vault the height was sixty-four feet. In every way it is organic, masterly, even sublime. Purely English, it contains no trace of French influence whatever and marks our own thirteenth century Gothic at the highest point of its development. Throughout it is supple, varied, competent; no halting, no doubtfulness, no hesitation; the sure and confident work of great men who built as they lived, serene, manly, self-reliant.

Calm on the highest crest of a triumphant civilization, the abbot watched the guilds of masons as, with the unfailing instinct of the bee, they wrought impeccably,



Rievaulx—The Monks' Valley.

"For out of thought's interior sphere
These wonders rose to upper air;
And Nature kindly gave them place,
Adopted them into her race
And granted them an equal date
With Andes and with Ararat."

Day by day, without pause or questioning, "The conscious stone to beauty grew," until the noblest work of man stood ready for consecration; and from all over the land came bishops, abbots, monks — yes, even the Legate himself — to join in the final hallowing of that which was already sacred through the "love and terror" that had done honour to God and added another lustre to human history. Three centuries passed, and again men gathered for a high visitation, but this time with letters of confiscation, not with litanies and psalms; with picks and torches and gunpowder in place of crozier, candles, and incense, with curses instead of benisons. The last mass was said, the last bell pealed over hill and moor, the last prayer rose from the lips of men, and, exiled, dispossessed, blotted with the indelible stain of infamous pensioning, abbot and monk filed out of the consecrated enclosure, abandoning it forever to the tender mercies of the vindictive and the covetous, and the haunting bats by night and flapping rooks by day.

It is while in a presence like this of Rievaulx choir that one remembers, half with pitying contempt, half with a kind of whimsical glee, the dictum that once appeared in The Spectator, many years ago: "Let anyone reflect on the disposition of mind he finds in himself at his first entrance into the Pantheon at Rome and how the imagination is filled with something great and amazing; and at the same time consider how little, in proportion, he is affected with the inside of a Gothic cathedral, though it be five times larger than the other; which can arise from nothing else but the greatness of the manner in the one, and the meanness in the other." Oh, the poor and pitiful little eighteenth century, so purblind, so self-sufficing; it has passed as a dream, in laughter and without regret.

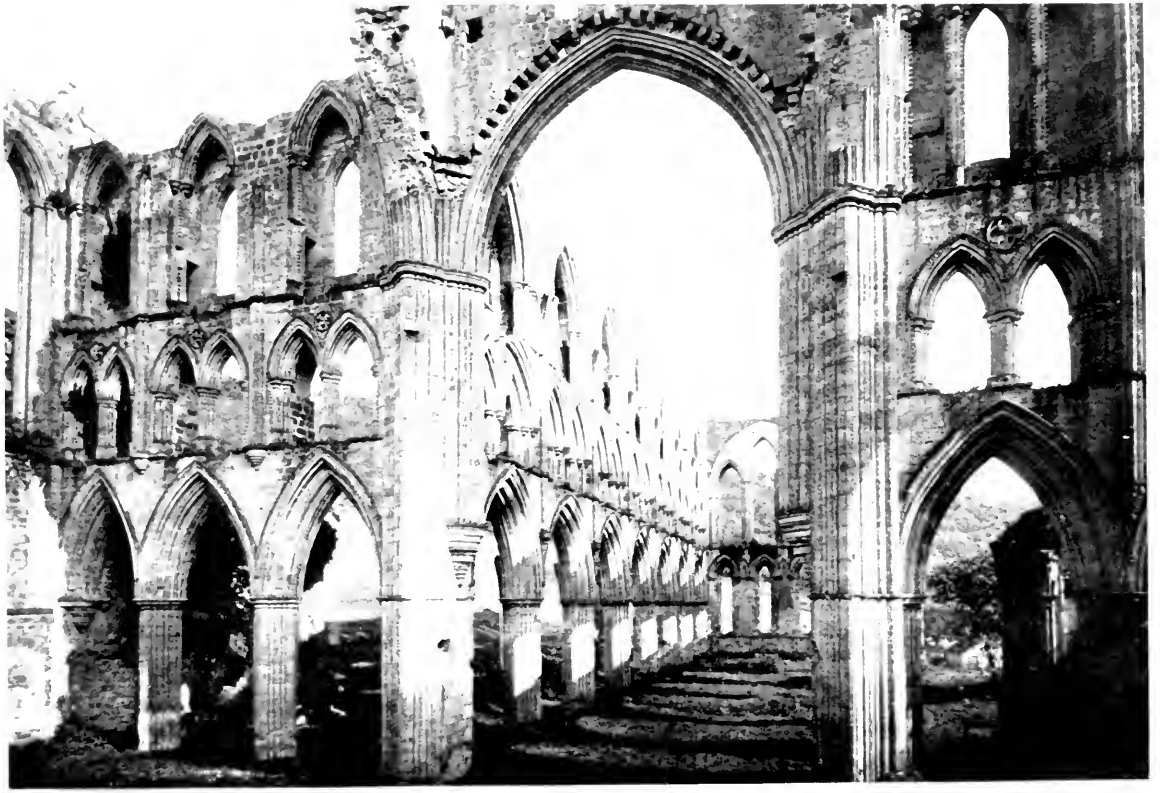
Sixteen years after the founding of Rievaulx by the hardy old warrior, Walter l'Espec, another Cistercian house was established only a few miles away in a wide valley beneath the Hambleton hills by a second sturdy fighter *in posse*, Roger de Mowbray. The beginnings of Byland are touching in their austerity and their manifold hardships, and are as well indicative of the general upheaval of the time when a great spiritual and moral convulsion was shaking England and bringing to light the underlying

force and righteousness that, operative at last under the control of great Churchmen, were to crush royal tyranny, create Magna Carta, and fix the strong type of English character for generations.

The revolt signalized and made triumphant by St. Bernard on the continent was in England coincident rather than sequent; indeed, the learned Marquis of Ripon, the tender guardian of the ruins of Fountains Abbey, most beautiful of all Cistercian monuments, says: "It would seem that the small band who dissented from what they thought the laxity of the Benedictine Rule, as observed at St. Mary's at York, were spontaneously actuated in the same direction as St. Bernard, and that it was not until some time after they had seceded from the abbey at York, and obtained a foothold on the banks of the Skell, that they sought the council of that great light and adopted willingly the ascetic rules then imposed upon them." If this is so, and the dates indicate its truth, then it is probable also that, when the superior and his twelve brothers seceded from Furness in 1134, they went, not at the instigation, or in emulation, of St. Bernard, but because revolt and regeneration were in the air; the acceptance of the Cistercian Rule would, therefore, be at the hands of Archbishop Turstan

of York, to whom the thirteen applied for guidance in their difficulties.

In any case, the secession took place in 1134, only three years after the founding of the first Cistercian community at Rievaulx. The protestants against monastic laxity fled first to Calder, chose one Gerald as their abbot, and were about to begin the erection of a monastery when an incursion of the Scots drove them forth into the wilderness again. Back to Furness they went, but the doors were shut against them, and wearily they turned around to seek the council of Archbishop Turstan, who already had done so much to establish both Rievaulx and Fountains, and who they knew would sympathize with their righteous motives. And so in the year 1138, appeared in the streets of Thresk, or Thirsk, as it is now written, a pitiful procession of thirteen footsore pilgrims accompanied by an ox-wain laden with books, sacred vessels, and a few shreds of clothing. The seneschal of the castle of Thresk, taking pity on the travellers, gave them entertainment and then told the Lady Gundreda, mother of Roger de Mowbray, then a minor, what he had done. "And when the said lady, in a certain upper chamber, had peeped secretly through a certain window and seen their poverty, for very piety and pity she



Rievaulx—A Thirteenth Century Masterpiece.

melted into tears." Gerald and his monks were commanded to remain under the protection of the lady Gundreda, and at first for their maintenance they received a tithe of all things that came to the castle larder. This charitable plan worked ill, so the young Roger gave the pilgrim monks his own cow pasture at Cambe, while his mother from her own dower granted them the vill of Byland on the Moor, or Old Byland. This gave them about seven hundred acres, but there was little space for proper conventual buildings, and besides the site was quite too near Rievaulx, just across the river Rye in point of fact: "The two houses were too near each other to allow of it, for at every hour of the day and night the one convent could hear the bells of the other; and this was unseemly, and could not in any way long be borne," so in 1147 Roger gave them two carucates of land under the hill of Blackhow, where a new stone church and monastery, small but seemly, were erected and used for upwards of thirty years, Old Byland still being retained for a time as a cell or priory under the abbot at Stocking, as the new place was called. It was from Old Byland that the monks went forth to found Jervaulx, when, in all probability, Rievaulx was left in sole occupation of the valley of the Rye.

At last, in 1177, the peregrinations of Gerald's monks came to an end: the last removal was made to the place where now stand the splintered fragments of a vast and glorious church; success, wealth, favour had come to the pilgrims; a great monastery was erected, and for three hundred and fifty years Byland continued to grow in power and in beauty; here, in the splendid church that had arisen on the land he had granted and as a result of his own and his mother's mercy, old Roger de Mowbray, now a famous Crusader, after all his fighting and his two journeys to Jerusalem, took the cowl as an humble Cistercian monk, and, "after life's fitful fever," lay down to die in sanctity, being buried next his mother under a great stone whereon was carven a long Crusader's sword. Here he slept in peace through the glory and the shame that fell on Byland until the year 1819 when, his bones being discovered, they were conveyed, with notable piety, by one Martin Stapylton to the church at Myton, where now they rest.

Of the once magnificent monastery little now remains: almost every trace of the conventual buildings is gone and of the church itself the fragments still standing give little idea of its original design; the west front, half-way up the round of the rose-window, is still extant, while

some of the aisle walls mantled with deep ivy remain, but every trace of arcade, triforium and clerestory is gone; it is a shattered shell, no more. Yet Byland was a thing we can ill spare: one complete and consistent design unmodified by later changes, it was an example of the earliest Gothic in England, a work mingled in Norman and true Gothic motives, round and pointed arches being used indifferently, together with broad flat piers or pilasters and jutting buttresses. Bound to report in France at the General Chapter on Holy Cross day in every year, the Cistercian abbots always brought back some new idea worth working out in the great development of the national Gothic style, for the growth of which they were so largely responsible; and here at Byland were many proofs of this continental influence, among them being the great rose window. It must be noted, however, that in no case was there absolute copying. Every hint was a hint only: in its development it became thoroughly English, and neither here nor elsewhere can we find a peg whereon to hang the current charge that English Gothic was at best no more than a barbarous imitation of the pure style as it was in France. Ideas were accepted wherever found, whether in France or in the Holy Land; but each was com-

pletely assimilated, and when it acquired expression in masonry, it was an English thing, consistent, national, individual.

Byland was, again, the first example in England of the Cistercian abandonment of the original ascetic plan. Here the aisleless choir gave place to the magnificent full-aisled church, the vaulted passage-way continuing down both sides of the choir and around the eastern end. When Byland was built, the architectural expression of Cistercianism had ceased to retain its original character so far as plan was concerned, though the pristine severity of detail and simplicity of parts remained. Henceforward the Cistercians were to be at one with the Benedictines in their grateful labour of developing Gothic as a logical style indivisible for all England.

The peculiar austerity and beneficence of this great order lasted less than two centuries. By the beginning of the fourteenth century it had grievously fallen away from the ideals of its saintly founders and those of its greatest exponent. At the time of the Suppression it furnished few martyrs to Henry's greed as compared with the Benedictines, who had taken on a new lease of life. Only too often the Cistercian houses were tamely surrendered to the "visitors," pensions and preferment being ac-

All that is Left of Proud Byland.

cepted in quit claim of sacred and inalienable rights. Of course it must be borne in mind that by the time the blow fell on the greater houses Henry had shown quite unmistakably that some horrible form of death was the only thing to be expected by those who dared to resist his robbery; and it took the splendid spirit of martyrs to resist him, as did the immortal abbots of the great Benedictine houses of Glastonbury, Reading, and Colchester, knowing as they did that such resistance would not stay his hand for a day, and that it would end only in their own death. Rievaulx surrendered, and Byland; John Leeds, last of the line in the latter house, with his twenty-four monks gave over the vast possessions they held in trust, in the year 1540, at which time the lands formed nearly all of fifty-three townships with rights and privileges in twenty-eight others. The revenues amounted to the equivalent of fifteen thousand dollars per annum, not a large sum by any means, while the plate aggregated only five hundred and sixteen ounces. Six years later Byland was granted to Sir William Pickering, from whom it passed to Stapleton of Wighill, later to Myton of Swale. For generations unnumbered it has stood as a common stone quarry, its fragments being found built into the walls of every cottage in the neigh-

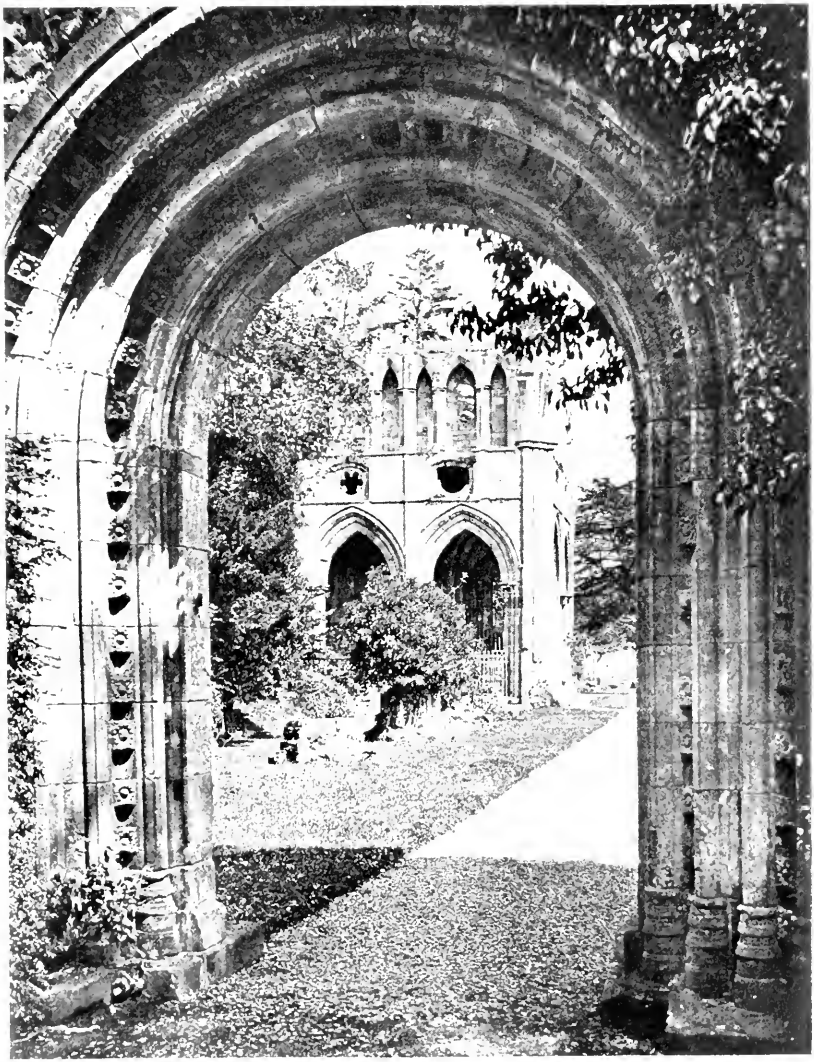
bourhood. It is now desolate and forsaken; uncared for, neglected, despised. The ground within the walls has been partly cleared, but mounds of débris still cry for excavation, while the ivy runs riot over crumbling walls, and day by day its dust is returning to dust.

MELROSE AND DRYBURGH

WITH the dawn of the fourteenth century the gathering dusk around the Cistercian Order deepened into night. It had done a vast work, this wonderful emanation from the brains of St. Robert and St. Stephen Harding, into which, under God, St. Bernard had breathed a soul, compelling and creative, if yet not defended from mortality. The day of its supremacy had passed, and a new agency for righteousness was to enter England, in the persons of the friars of the mendicant orders, to take up the work that for a time was being ill done by the older and more dignified orders of monasticism. The twelfth century had been the great age of Benedictine building, the thirteenth, that of the Cistercians. The friars, who rejected all vested interests, refused endowments, settled in slums and Jewries, and built hardly at all, failed to fix any mark on the architecture of the fourteenth century. The Augustinians were crescent then, and, as we have seen at Gisburgh, wrought often

gloriously, but the architecture of the fourteenth century, so far as monastic work is concerned, was largely an architecture of substitution, enlargement, embellishment; except when, as at Gisburgh and now far north in the Kingdom of Scotland, at Melrose, fire and sword annihilated some earlier structures and so made complete new building imperative.

Already we have seen at Byland in the very first years of the thirteenth century the beginnings of backsliding on the part of the Cistercians in the abandonment of an ascetic architecture in favour of the highly developed and majestic Benedictine type with its threefold structural order and its complete system of processional aisles. At Rievaulx the renunciation has gone a step further as the century reached its meridian: stained glass has been accepted, and sculpture also, in all probability, though decorative carving has been eschewed, indeed, I suspect that the great crag of masonry near the site of the chapter house betrays a lofty and majestic bell tower, reared in final violation of Cistercian doctrine and discipline. For the last step in the abandonment of their asceticism we must pass north across the border to that lovely valley of the Tweed, where Scotland's three great Kings, St. David, Alexander III., and



West Door of Dryburgh.

Robert the Bruce, have left in the abbeys of Jedburgh, Kelso, Dryburgh, and Melrose, a memorial of their piety and, though degeneration has done its best to blot this out, a record of the artistic power of a nation once great, independent, and, as well, splendidly devoted to the Catholic Faith.

Kelso, Jedburgh, Dryburgh, and Melrose are in themselves a complete architectural history from St. David to Robert the Bruce, a period of two hundred and fifty years: from the frowning keep of Kelso, half castle and half sanctuary, Norman in every line, through the earliest transitional Gothic of Jedburgh, the later and fuller "Early Pointed" of Dryburgh, to the opulent "Decorated" of Melrose and even to the Scottish parallel of the then contemporary "Perpendicular" of the southern Kingdom.

Melrose is marvellous, no less. Haunted of history, legend, and tradition, fretted with exquisite carving and embroidered with intricate tracery, glittering with all the specious paraphernalia of flying buttresses, canopied niches, panel-work, and pinnacles, shattered into infinite picturesqueness, and aureoled with the halo of fine writing, it is one of the show places of Great Britain, thronged with sightseers and trippers: death and dissolution turned into a spectacle,

a pageant, and cannily rendered profitable by the tribute of gate money. Beautiful it is indeed, a wonder of sorrowful pictures; priceless also as a record of the mutations and modulations of architectural style; and yet, judged by the standards of York Abbey and Whitby, Rievaulx and Gisburgh, it is not great architecture, for it lacks directness and co-ordination, it is wanting in that quality of inevitable organization, that masterly incarnation of the principles of proportion, composition, development of structure, and the relationship of parts, that raises the true masterpieces of British building to the highest levels of human achievement.

And having granted this it is possible to sit down before the church of Our Lady of Melrose and abandon one's self to utter enjoyment and admiration. Magisterial classicism is absent, but in its place is a spontaneous originality and a poignant personality greater, perhaps, than one may find in any other single piece of monastic architecture in all Great Britain. The work is casual, episodical, part of it without rhyme or reason; but in the end one does not care in the least, for at every point one finds beauty and charm and magic witchery. The earlier monks "built in a sad sincerity," but here is the work of guilds of jolly laymen, and at every

point the stones proclaim the fact that when they worked at Melrose these freemasons were on one great holiday. Is a colloquialism admissible? If so, one may say that "they were having the time of their lives."

St. Bernard was forgotten, the fourteenth century had come and asceticism was out of favour, the abbey was rich, the ground had been cleared of the stern old church of the monks that had come from Rievaulx bearing the Gospel according to St. Bernard, for Bannockburn had been fought, the English were utterly routed, and in frantic vengeance the fleeing hosts had paused long enough to wreak vengeance on every unarmed thing that stood in their way. Melrose was utterly destroyed, but the foundations remained and for some unrevealed reason were permitted to fix the lines of the eastward termination, so Melrose stands in form a typical Cistercian church with aisleless sanctuary; but in every other respect the bars were down, and the enthusiastic freemasons were given a free hand and even incited to outdo themselves in all the wonders of their craft.

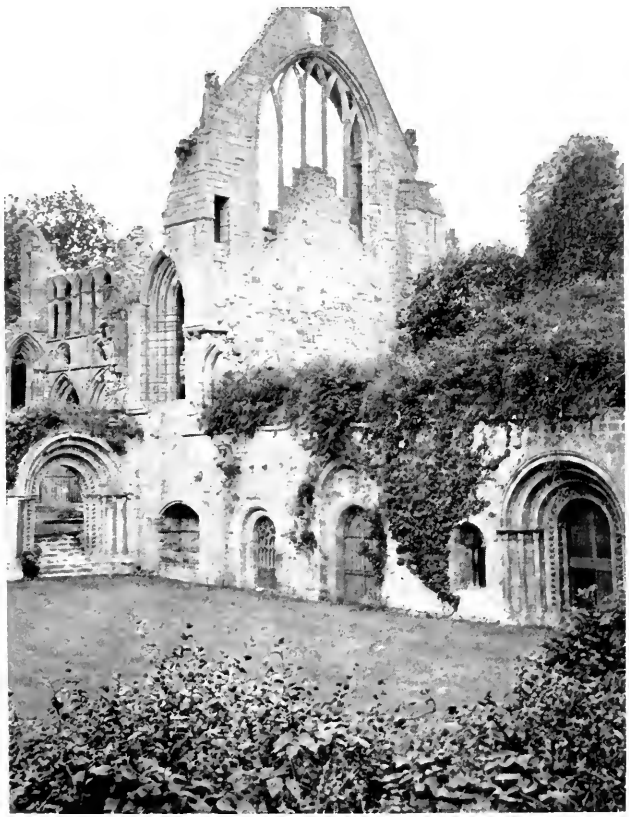
It was a carnival of æsthetic license and of the emulation of ambitious and clever artists; the day of the abbot who traced the lines of his church on the greensward with the tip of his

jewelled crozier that his monks with kilted cassocks might hew and lay the stones, had passed forever, and instead had come the epoch of architect and mason. It was a complete and utter revolution, and here the line was drawn; here, in the walls of Melrose is cut the name and superscription of one of the architects of the new régime, John, surnamed Morvo, Morow, or Murdo, as the case may be, for he was indifferent as to spelling, though very far therefrom in the matter of honest pride in his work and a desire that his name, in some form or other, should survive. Over the turret door in the south transept is cut in beautiful "black-letter" about a shield having crossed compasses between three fleur-de-lys the following words:

"Sa gaes ye compass even about sa truth and laute do but doubte behalde to ye hende q john morvo."

Nor was this enough; so a little above is a second inscription, *viz.:*

"John morow: sum tyme: callit: was: i: and born: in parysse: certainly: and had: in: kepping: all: mason: work: of: santan: druys: ye: hye: kyrk: of: glasgu: melros: and: pasley: of: nyddysdall: and: of: galway: i: pray: to: god: and: mary: baith: and: sweet: st: john: keep: this: haly: kirk: frae: skaith:"



Dryburgh—The Cloisters.

Was this some "Jean Moreau," who was "born in parysse certainly," a true Frenchman, or was he christened John Murdo and born of Scottish parents living in France? It matters little, for the work he did for the "haly kirk" of "Melros" is French only in its impulse and suggestion: English it is not in any way or fashion, for from the day of Robert the Bruce the Scotch would have learned of any paynims on earth sooner than from the Southrons; but though "John of Parysee" brought to the rebuilding of Melrose all the enthusiasm won from the witnessing of what France was then about, he and his lodge of freemasons (the first, with that of Kilwinning, in Scotland) showed no inclination to duplicate continental work; instead they started off on a new tack, invented all manner of new devices, became good Scots, and went lustily to work to develop a national style.

And they accomplished wonders: they were not mighty classicists like the builders of Rievaulx and Whitby and York; they were poets, romanticists; form did not interest them, but decoration did, also the discovery of all manner of new motives for pier sections, arch mouldings, clerestory windows, tracery, vault shafts. Who built King Robert's church we do not know, certainly not the pious John of

Paris. Whether he arrived on the scene with his band of freemasons in time to begin the rebuilding, after the visitation of Richard II. in 1389, I confess I cannot say, though it must be on record. Lacking the information, I am inclined to assume that here also the rehabilitation was begun by an unknown master and only carried on towards completion by John Mordo during the last years of the fifteenth and the first of the sixteenth centuries. The line of demarcation between the first two periods is explicit: the earliest and purest, *viz.*, the three existing bays of the nave with the north and west walls of the north transept and the bay next the crossing in the west wall of the south transept, together with the lower stages of the south wall of this same transept, is a model of noble art; while the first of the new work, dating from the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries, if more scrupulous and ornate, is on a far lower plane of imagination. As the work went on it degenerated slowly, showing a new hand quite unmistakably, and this new hand was, I fancy, that of Parisian John. The oldest work is wonderful in its nobility and its mobile freedom joined to a pure and almost perfect beauty, the younger is overloaded, luxurious, and in its last estate

angular and sometimes mechanical, while at the same time trivial and even lawless.

The church Robert the Bruce caused to be built with his princely gift of the equivalent of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars to-day must have been as purely beautiful as anything in Great Britain. The original design did not include the great south range of aisle chapels, while, if there were flying buttresses at all, they were simple in form and minus the richly niched and crocketed pinnacles that are now so important a part of the mise-en-scène. Rich and supple as is the work done at the command of Robert the Bruce, it is rich with the splendour of brilliant and well controlled imagination: all is firm, sure, gentlemanly. As for the carving of cap, boss, corbel, crocket, and string course, it is finally perfect: flowers and vegetables of field and garden have been used as models; the stone employed was fortunately one that hardened into iron, and in spite of one calamity after another ending with three and a half centuries of utter neglect, the crisp chiselling is as keen to-day as it was when it left the hand of the mason. No decorative sculpture more beautiful than this has ever owed its existence to the hand of man.

The rebuilding after the terrible visitation of

the English king must have been done slowly and by degrees. It probably occupied a space of nearly a century, at least down to and including the incumbency of Abbot Hunter, 1450–1460. If not this, then the central tower must have fallen about this time, necessitating another rebuilding, for the shafts next the eastern piers of the tower are unmistakably late fifteenth century and poor, the sanctuary dating from the same period, and the westernmost of the aisle chapels also, while the eastern nave chapels and the upper portion of the south transept are much earlier, though surely a century later than King Robert's work. Abbot Hunter's monogram appears in many places in the work towards the east and as well in the earlier of the nave chapels; the last buttress of all bears the royal arms and the date 1505, and, though it may have been inserted in earlier work, probably proves that the rebuilding and extension were constant and uninterrupted from the visitation of Richard II. until the final destruction of the abbey by the English in 1545. So complete is the ruin and so puzzling the laudable practice of the renovators in using over again material from the more ancient church, Melrose is a veritable enigma and a fruitful field for the architect and archæologist.

Under the Tower of Melrose.

But whether or no we give it absolute praise as art, linking it with York and Gisburgh, as a picture and as an impulse to every kind of poetic emotion it finds rivals only in Glastonbury, Netley, and Fountains. All this follows, however, from the peculiarly effective nature of the ruins and from the thronging memories and associations that haunt its walls like grey ghosts. Hard as was the fate of the English abbeys, that of those in Scotland has been immeasurably more bitter. Robbed and ruined by "commendatory abbots," sacked and burned by invading armies, dying by treachery, and abandoned at last to canny "squatters," the great fabrics have not only served as parish stone-quarries, they have fallen a prey to thrifty citizens who parcelled out the lands and buildings among themselves, reserving some portion of the church itself for the uses of the local "presbytery." Instead, therefore, of lonely ruins hidden in shielding forests, forgotten often of man, we find the glories of ancient Scotland jostled by hovels, workshops, and inns, rising sheer, not from green meadows or amongst tangled thickets of thorn, but out of unseemly assemblages of shops and houses crowding up into cloister and graveyard, obliterating every trace of chapter house, refectory, dorter, even,

in some cases, of portions of the church itself.

Here at Melrose, while there is one good view from the highway to the south across gardens and the eighteenth century graveyard, and another from the east, all to the north and west has become a sordid huddle of modern edifices blotting out all trace of the original monastic buildings and the greater part of the close. A tiny triangle of turf is all that remains of the cloister-garth; the rest, with the site of all the many buildings of the monastery itself, is overrun with cheap dwellings and crowded gardens: the "Abbey Hotel" almost touches the last stones of the nave, narrow alleys thread the once sacred precincts, and everywhere is the connotation of meanness and encroaching greed. The Duke of Buccleuch has done and is doing all he can to save what still remains, but there is a burning need of some general action that will seize the whole area once included in the close to the north and west, sweep it clear of the cumbering buildings, and trace again the lines of the once vast monastery, pressing back into bounds the lawless holdings of the laity, leaving the splendid ruin isolated once more and purged of its unworthy neighbours.

But there is another crying need more impor-

tunate yet perfectly possible of achievement: when in 1618 the desecrated wreck fell into the hands of the local "presbytery" the three bays of the nave that still remained, about a tenth of the original church, were found quite sufficient for the religious needs of the growing town under the new order of things, and they were walled in and rehabilitated after a fashion that in its horrible barbarism is a lasting commentary on the relationship between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries. These crude masses of savage masonry, preaching insistently the terrible change that had come over the minds and the powers of men, still stand, hiding the whole north arcade, beheading the exquisite order of the clerestory, substituting in place of a once wonderful and delicate vaulting a barbarous barrel vault of clumsy masonry. The lesson this contrast teaches is important, but now that it is learned the shameful records may be destroyed and the noble ruin purged of an hateful intruder.

Apart from the wonderful charm of Melrose as a ruin and a thing of strange, almost unearthly beauty, lies another power over the imagination almost equal in its potency. The mere name brings up an endless succession of memories, dreams of those whose mortal parts once lay

within the walls in peaceful sepulture. Here rested the good King, Alexander II., and his Queen; Douglasses unnumbered; Sir William of Lothian; William, first Earl of Douglass; another William, called "the Dark Knight of Liddesdale, the Flower of Chivalry"; the "Good Sir James," who, faithful to the death, brought back from the Holy Land "the Heart of Bruce," that it might be buried beneath the high altar in the church he had made glorious. Here also were buried the dark and mysterious Michael Scott, "The Race of ye Hous of Zair," "Scotts of Gala," "Pringles of Galashiels," "Bostons of Gattonside"; of these last four families many who died long after the ruin of the abbey, but who still sought burial, as their fathers had done, within the sacred walls. Dust and ashes are dispersed and have become united with the dust and ashes of the perished abbey, but the chiselled records still last in the hard stone of the walls or in shards of tomb and tablet.

Of an hundred statues that once looked down from fretted niche and windy pinnacle some few still stand. The Presbyterians wrecked the greater part, but curiously enough St. Bridget still remains in her niche, St. Peter, St. Paul, St. John Baptist, St. Andrew, and, most wonderful of all when one thinks of the temper of the

Melrose—The Trail of the English Army.

time, a coronation of the Blessed Virgin, and another statue of Our Lady with the Holy Child in her arms. When in 1649 a certain zealot climbed to the buttress pinnacle to shatter this last statue, the first fragment split off struck and broke his arm, and ever since the sacred image has been left in peace. On either side the south transept are figures of monks bearing scrolls, on which are written in abbreviated Latin words that are strangely prophetic: to the east, "He suffered because He Himself willed it"; to the west, "When comes Jesus the Mediator darkness will cease."

With Melrose may be linked another abbey, the Præmonstratensian monastery of Dryburgh, partly because of its geographical propinquity, partly because of its foundation under the patronage of the same royal saint, King David, partly from its close association with Melrose in the love and devotion of Sir Walter Scott, who reverenced Melrose, but lies buried in Dryburgh, partly for the reason that the latter house is one of the few in Scotland that is not insulted by "squatter sovereignty." Dryburgh, utter ruin that it is, and small and modest as it was in its best estate, is a thing of pure beauty, lapped in thick verdure, tenderly cherished by its present proprietor, G. O. H. E. S. Erskine, Esquire.

The approach is just what it should be: a walk or drive from Melrose or St. Boswells through quiet country lanes, a passage of the Tweed by the long, unstable foot-bridge, a plunge into forest, a sudden outcoming into a sunny little glade where, ringed by great oaks and submerged in an everlasting peace, all that is left of Dryburgh basks in the sun. It is not supremely important architecturally: nothing remains of the church but the east wall of the north transept and two bays of the north choir wall, with three aisle bays at the angle, the gable of the south transept, a fragment of that to the north, and the lower stages of the west wall. The conventual buildings are better preserved, the eastern range being nearly intact, while the cloister is clearly marked by standing walls. The refectory, which in monasteries of this order lay parallel to the church, is gone, all but portions of its undercroft, and its beautiful west end with the delicate rose window. The easterly buildings, including the chapter house and fratry, are early transitional Norman, the church a fine North version of what in the South would be called "Early English," the refectory, early fourteenth century, evidently dating from the rebuilding made necessary by the visitation of Edward II. after Bannockburn. The earlier

work is probably a part of the original construction provided for by Hugo de Morville, Lord Lauderdale, and his wife Beatrix de Beauchamp, in 1150. Why or when the new church was built we do not know; but it was a fine, strong piece of early Gothic, consistently differentiated from the contemporary work in England. It is particularly interesting in that it shows how the Scotch clung to the round arch long after the rest of their work had become thoroughly Gothic; not only is the thirteenth century door of the monks round arched, though with purely Gothic mouldings and capitals, but the fourteenth century west door, built after the burning of the abbey by Richard II. in 1385, is the same. Nowhere in Great Britain did Gothic builders attach any particular sanctity to the pointed arch, and in Scotland especially, arches of all possible centrings were used at will.

Dryburgh is one of the few ruins remaining of the houses of Præmonstratensian monks, or friars, as they were more commonly called; indeed it is practically the only one in Great Britain that is more than a legend and a tradition. At the Suppression there were but thirty houses in England, and perhaps a fourth as many in Scotland. An offshoot of the great Augustinian reformation, the order was the creation of St.

Norbert, a noble of Xanten, near Cologne, who, having tried in vain to bring the canons of Laon under some orderly rule of life, retired to a marshy valley called Premontré, in Picardy, where he forthwith founded for himself an order of great distinction, the rules of which, based on those said to have been drawn up by St. Augustine himself, were of notable rigour and severity. None was admitted as a canon who was not a Latin scholar; absolute and unquestioning obedience was exacted; and an unusual amount of time was assigned to manual labour, which was obligatory upon all. It appears also from the Rule and the records that singular insistence was laid on the virtues of thoughtfulness for others, courtesy, good manners, and scrupulous ceremonial.

The name of Dryburgh has been associated with those of many men eminent in their day: Abbot Oliver, royal ambassador to England; Canon Patrick, poet and man of letters; Ralph of Strode, the friend of Chaucer and lusty antagonist of Wiclif; Chaucer himself, who lived here for a time; and finally, during the early sixteenth century, a line of commendators, some of whom were less infamous than the general run of these royal bloodsuckers who were responsible for the ruin and fall of monasticism

Melrose Abbey

in Scotland. Of the first of these, Andrew Forman, no good can be said, except that he was a clever though profligate and unscrupulous diplomat. He rivalled even Wolsey as a pluralist, and ruin followed his footsteps wherever they fell in abbey or cathedral. Ogilvie and Hamilton followed, the latter a natural son of Lord Hamilton, father of the Earl of Arran; and finally came James Stuart, who tried in vain to stem the tide of simony, sacrilege, and depredation that was engulfing the Scottish Church.

The end came in 1545. A year before that choice aggregation, Sir Ralph Eure, Sir George Bowes, and Sir Brian Layton, at the head of the invading English army had burned Dryburgh town and laid waste a great area of fertile country. This action so charmed Henry VIII. he promised Eure and Layton a feudal grant of the land they had devastated; thereupon Archibald Douglass, Earl of Angus, true to the spirit of his great house, promised "to write the deed of investiture upon their skins with sharp pens and bloody ink." And he did so in a year, for there fell one of those acts of retribution that brighten the pages of history. Back again on their evil errand and anxious to make good their title to their new estates, Eure and Lay-

ton, with three thousand mercenaries, fifteen hundred English foot, and a few hundred disaffected Scots, swept through the lowlands, burned Melrose, Kelso, Dryburgh, and four more abbeys, sixteen castles, five great towers, two hundred and forty-three villages, etc., and so turned homeward with light hearts. But a just fate lay waiting them on the field of Ancrum Moor: there they were confronted by the fearless Earl of Angus, Norman Lesly, and Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch. Eure and Layton attacked desperately, but the Scottish lances bore down their men, the lowlanders went over to their own people, Eure and Layton were slain in the field, and the entire English force was put to utter rout, eight hundred being killed, more than a thousand taken. It was too late to save the great abbeys that were the pride of Scotland; but at least we may rejoice that Eure and Layton were killed within hail of the sanctuaries they had despoiled and by the Douglass, the tombs of whose ancestors they had dishonoured in Melrose Abbey.

The throne and the new spirit of the age had with simony, confiscation, and abbots commendatory, brought down in ruins the Church of Scotland and the spiritual fabric of monasticism, but the abbeys themselves owe their

ruin in the first instance less to lay favourites of a dishonoured royal house than to the fire and sword of English invaders sent by the king who already had wrought his will on the Church in England.

KIRKSTALL

ONCE upon a time, far in the south of England, a certain hermit dwelt by himself, apart; and in the watches of the night a voice called him by name and said "Seleth, arise! Go thou unto the province of York, and there thou shalt find a certain valley hidden in deep-bosomed forests far from the footsteps of men. In Airedale it lies, and its name is called Kirkstall; there shalt thou prepare for the Brotherhood a home where they may serve my Son."

"And who is thy Son whom we must serve?"

"I am Mary, and my Son is called Jesus of Nazareth, the Saviour of the World."

Thereupon Seleth arose, and, taking certain other holy men with him, journeyed towards the north until he found the valley that is called Kirkstall, and there he and his brethren abode in prayer for a time.

And upon a day came before him a certain abbot, Alexander by name, and superior of the Cistercian abbey of Mt. St. Mary. Now the

Kirkstall—In the Chapter House.

abbot was troubled in his mind; for it was ill with his house, and incessant quarrels with the neighbouring secular priests, coupled with great adversity, had filled him with sorrow. The Lord Henry de Lacy, mercifully recovered from a deadly sickness, had granted land and money for the founding of a religious house under the direction of the Abbot of Fountains, but already on this land there were secular priests, and warfare got between them and the monks from Fountains, to such degree that in sudden rage he, Alexander the Abbot, had pulled down the parish church, because of which he had been accused before the Pope himself, and, though justified by the Holy See, his conscience was troubled and he no longer loved the lands where his new house stood.

The peace of God brooded over this sunny and hidden valley; none knew thereof save the humble hermits striving to serve God though without rule or order; the beauty of the place with its little river, its deep meadows ringed with untrodden woods, its many flowers and its song of birds, struck to the heart of the impatient and unhappy abbot, and, finding that the hermits were not averse to accepting the Rule of the blessed Saint Robert, the abbot departed and, coming before de Lacy, prayed that he might

remove from St. Mary's and begin again in the gentle valley of the Aire. The which was permitted, for William de Poictu, the lord of the lands, at the petition of his friend granted Kirkstall to the monks, in perpetuity, at the rent of five marks per year.

The transfer was made; the hermits became Cistercian monks; and forthwith Alexander began the erection of a great abbey which was speedily completed, the while an ever increasing household laboured to reduce the wilderness and bring it under cultivation. It was in the year of Our Lord 1153 that Alexander brought his monks to Kirkstall; for thirty years thereafter he lived and worked, and, when he died, he left the vast monastery perfect and finished and almost as it stands to-day.

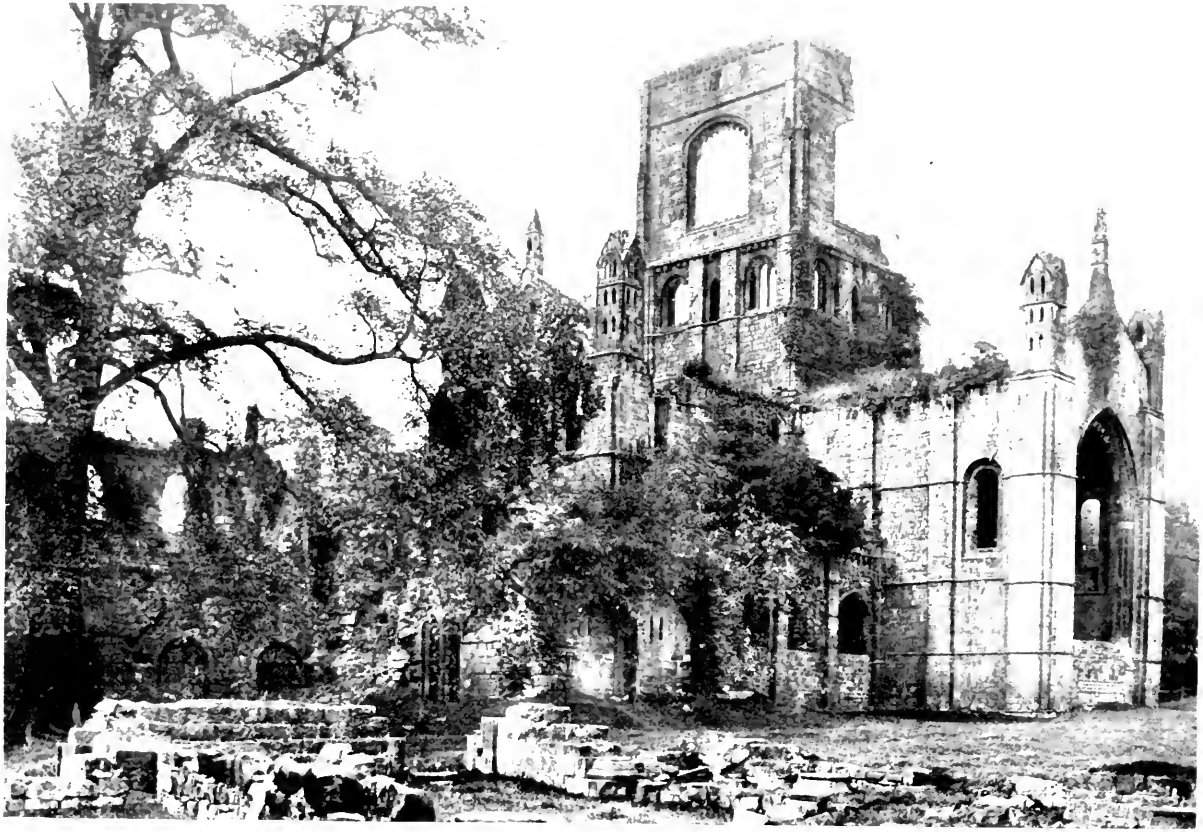
Rather, as its hopeless ruins stand, for after three centuries and a half it was given over to ruin and sacrilege, and for yet another three hundred and fifty years the wreck stood desolate, whilst the wilderness crept back over the lands the monks had cleared: like advancing armies, rank on rank the steady trees sprung up nearer and nearer, the vines and wild plants crept up and over the walls, and in cloister and sanctuary and unroofed rooms tall trees flourished unchecked, while the crystal Aire vanished once

more in the midst of trees and shrubs and clambering vines.

Fifty years have brought a sea-change of deepest melancholy. As late as the year 1835 one might sit in the inn at Kirkstall Bridge (an experience one does not repeat a second time in this year of Grace 1905) and look across still fields to where by the then untainted Aire, the ivy-hung ruins rose silent, reproachful, yet serene. Now one leaves the singularly repellant and obnoxious city of Leeds, buried in its fog of filthy smoke, turbulent with a tide of strident mill-hands, glad even of the screeching train that removes him from a scene of such superb commercial activity. A few minutes serves to bring him to the black little station at Kirkstall; he crosses the bridge, and then, off to the left, he sees the shattered tower of the abbey, not over lush fields, but between harsh walls of clamouring mills and through the gaunt palings of foul chimneys belching dull clouds of smoke into the already overladen air. And the limpid river, the gentle stream that was once so clear and pure it justified the old spelling of "Chrystall" Abbey: where is it? There still, in a way, but how hideously changed: "where once the deer, wild boar and white bull were wandering in unfrequented woods or wading in un-

tainted waters," harsh piles of festering refuse break down into a slow tide creeping shamefully onward, glittering with the noxious iridescence of sewers and waste-pipes, clogged by rubbish, thickened with slime. We turn away in disgust, but to the right the prospect is equally evil. Every vestige of forest and field is gone, and the great roll of hillside is scored across by parallel streets, newly laid out, foolishly named, and half built up with blocks of the cheapest, ugliest, and most criminal tenements conceivable to the imagination. A more loathsome suburb one could not find: it possesses every known element of the sordid and the savage that is the inevitable concomitant of industrial civilization. Again one looks away, this time towards the venerable abbey now close at hand. Waiting for the clanging passage of several trolley-cars, bedizened with glaring advertisements, and avoiding a dray or two of clanking scrap-iron, one enters the monastic precincts and finds — a smug and neatly tended public park, with nice cinder paths, neat beds of party-coloured flowers, iron palings, varnished garden seats, and printed signs and warnings at every turn.

From the abbey itself every sign of tree or shrub or vine or flower has been eliminated; it now stands gaunt and naked, as harsh and



Kirk Yard—Before its Restoration

crude as when it was left by the despoilers nearly four centuries ago. An elegant and commodious band-stand fronts the west portal; a section of one of the monastic buildings has been turned into a shop for the sale of engaging and inexpensive souvenirs, light refreshments, and ginger-pop, whilst alluring penny-in-the-slot machines are ranged in serried ranks along the venerable walls.

Well, it is all a good breathing-space for the languid mill-hands of Leeds: here on a shiny bench an old man is dozing peacefully; beside him a young mechanic is poring over congenial news in a cheap sporting paper; along the paths a lanky girl trundles her little brother in a shabby perambulator, whilst a pale and evidently sickly father leads a querulous and equally sickly child around the cloister walks. The old has succumbed to the new, and now the new, weary and unsatisfied and broken, turns again for refreshment to the ruins of the old: a strange curve, not yet prolonged into a perfect ring.

Kirkstall is not, nor ever was, an abbey of distinguished beauty: it is too early in date for that; but it is practically all of one period, unusually well preserved, quite untransformed by later additions of Benedictine choir or sumptuous accessories of any kind, therefore it is

deeply interesting, and profoundly valuable as a perfect type of the earliest and most characteristic Cistercian architecture.

Once, and not so long ago, it was picturesque and beautiful as well, for the walls were mantled with deep ivy, wall-flowers and eglantine grew along the crests, and great trees sheltered the poor ruins and made them all a part of nature itself. I found in a little shop some photographs of Kirkstall as it was ten years ago, and these will serve to show, in contrast with those of to-day, how much of pure beauty has been lost through the well-meaning efforts of archæologists and curators. It all seems pitifully unnecessary; so the wreck had stood for three hundred and fifty years, and no harm had come from the kindly guardianship of gentle vegetation; will the record of the future be more satisfactory now that the walls stand bare and lifeless, fortified with crude supports and braced by rigid tie-rods?

And it is all so well-intentioned, yet so inadequate. If Kirkstall must cease to be merely a perfect picture, if it must become a pleasure ground and breathing space for ugly Leeds, how much better it would have been had the reparation not ceased when it did: had the work continued, the vaults and roofs risen again, the

great tower continued to its ancient estate, the windows been filled with painted glass, the altars restored in sanctuary and chapel, and all turned over again to consecrated men. Then might have been resumed after the long silence the sequence of prayers and praise and the incessant pleading of the Sacrifice of Calvary; then might have begun anew the services of teaching and mercy, charity and consolation; and the precincts of Our Lady of Kirkstall would have come to be something more than one in a series of municipal improvements, an active, not a passive beneficence.

In many instances such rehabilitation would be impossible, whilst the sites of many abbeys would prevent their use as active and immediate agencies of assistance and leadership. We can not think of Netley shorn of its perfect beauty of nature's vestments, whilst Glastonbury, Gisburgh, Whitby, York, have been wrecked beyond reparation; but Kirkstall stands so nearly complete that, now its quality of beauty has been swept away, it seems clamorously imperative that it should be restored again to its sacred uses, particularly since its nearness to one of those festering centres of industry and progressive degradation, that cry to-day for spiritual leadership, makes the possibilities of

its beneficence so perfectly assured. As one stands in the great, gaunt nave, one dreams inevitably of the time when the music from the band-stand shall give place to solemn Gregorians beating antiphonally beneath the curving vaults of the great sanctuary; when the smoke of incense shall rise within the walls in place of the fumes of cheap tobacco; when penny-in-the-slot machines shall be superseded by the Church's Sacraments; and when the poor, the spiritually as well as the materially poor, shall come, not to look in dull wonder on blasted ruins, but to find the active and potent aid that comes from the hearts and hands of tried and proven men, bound under Divine law for the cure and salvation of souls.

Curiously enough I find in an amusing old hand-book for the abbey, printed in 1876 and written with all due regard to the traditional "monkish ignorance and superstition" that were once supposed so fully proven, an indication that exactly this course was once contemplated. It seems that "Colonel Ackroyd, M.P., and a committee of gentlemen formed for the purchase and partial restoration of Kirkstall Abbey," called in that great architect, the late Sir Gilbert Scott for the very purpose of indicating to them whether the abbey church could

Kirkstall Abbey.

be restored to its former estate, and if so, at what cost. Sir Gilbert's report is a masterpiece of reverential feeling. He says in part "where its stonework is hopelessly decayed, it must be renewed, though only in such extreme cases which will, I hope, be but a few, but I would never think of obliterating the corrosions of stones which three hundred winters have made upon the interior, but would leave these marks in commemoration, however humiliating, of all these long centuries of neglect. Externally the old bemossed surfaces would, of course, remain, as should be the case with any other ancient church."

His estimates of the total cost necessary for restoring the church itself to its former estate, together with altars, furniture, organ, decoration, and chairs, amounted to but thirty-four thousand two hundred and fifty pounds. It would seem then that even to-day the comparatively small sum of two hundred thousand dollars would be sufficient to make the church itself sound, whole, and complete once more, and ready for occupation.

Kirkstall is the most complete of all the ruined abbeys of Great Britain. The church itself is intact except for the roofs of the nave and transepts, which were never vaulted, and the

central tower; the eastern end with its vaulted sacrarium and six transept chapels is complete. The fifteenth century tower, the only violation of Cistercian order perpetrated at Kirkstall, fell sometime in the eighteenth century, but the ruin was by no means complete, one entire wall and part of a second still standing, whilst the injury to the main fabric wrought by this catastrophe was comparatively slight. Of the monastic buildings the major part remains: the infirmary and the range of buildings apportioned to the lay brothers were torn down immediately after the Suppression at the order of the town council of Leeds, the material being used for widening bridges and for road metal. All the rest is singularly perfect, so far as the lower walls are concerned, the remains of the abbot's lodgings being particularly complete. It is all in a massive, late Norman style, powerful and absolutely simple, without elaboration or ornament of any kind; the round arch is used throughout, except in the nave arcade and in the later additions, such as the great east window and the upper stage of the tower. Stern, almost forbidding in its design, it is a noble type of the architectural style first developed by the ascetic Cistercians, though immediately abandoned for the true Gothic, this order

was so instrumental in bringing to its highest estate in England.

The history of Kirkstall shows few episodes of great moment to any except the brothers therein. Alexander, the first abbot and great architect, was succeeded by Ralph Hageth "a religious man, and renounced for all sanctity," but doomed to adversity through the malice of the Crown. During his abbacy matters grew steadily worse until at last the poor abbot was driven to close his house and disperse the brothers amongst neighbouring abbeys, "chiefly because they hoped by these means to incline the Prince to compassion." Disappointed in this they gathered again at Kirkstall. Ralph was translated to Fountains, and an old monk, Lambert by name, assumed the crozier. Affairs ran no better under him: land was stolen from the monastery, granges were burned by the lawless tribes of the neighbourhood, and year after year Kirkstall sank under a heavy load of debt. Turgsius, the fourth abbot, strove by the savage severities of his life and his copious and unremitting tears, "whereof he shed so great a flood that he did not seem to weep but to rain down tears, in so much that the sacerdotal vestments he wore (at mass) could scarce be used by any other," to avert Divine anger from his house.

But all in vain: abbot after abbot succeeded, and died after brief incumbencies, until at last, when Hugh Grimstone was chosen in 1284, he found matters in a scandalous state. The monastery possessed but 16 draught cattle, 84 cows, and no sheep whatever, whilst the debts had arisen to the enormous and improbable sum of £5248. 15*s*. 7*d*., or more than $300,000 of our own time. Here was an heritage from centuries of mismanagement, indeed, but Kirkstall had a master at last. Abbot Grimston ruled twenty years, and just before his death the returns of the abbey he had so well administered show that then it was possessed of 216 oxen, 160 cows, 152 yearlings and bullocks, 90 calves, and 4000 sheep, and the gigantic debt had been reduced to £160. Surely a wonderful record of businesslike administration: one would willingly know more of Abbot Hugh, who so successfully brought order out of chaos, prosperity out of insolvency; but the chronicles are silent as to his personality, though unduly full of details as to his predecessor, Turgsius of the unquenchable tears.

Bad as must have been the century of misrule for the unhappy monks, it is probably to this very fact that we owe the primitive state of Kirkstall Abbey and all it demonstrates as to the

Kirkstall. From the river bank.

original form of the Cistercian type of church. The thirteenth century was the great period of architectual activity on the part of this order, and during this period the monks of Kirkstall were too harassed by debts to think of adding to the glory of their church, so to the end the Puritanical choir served them well, and still stands in evidence of the rigid severity that marked Cistercianism in its earliest estate.

Following Abbot Hugh came seven successors, of none of whom is any notable thing recorded, and finally John Ripley came into his heritage of sorrow on the 21st of July, 1509. He sat for thirty-one years, and until the day when Henry's emissaries demanded the surrender of the abbey with all its lands, and, the shameful paper signed under duress, evicted Abbot Ripley and his monks on the 22nd of November, 1540. The abbot himself was assigned a pension of the equivalent of about three thousand dollars per year; whether he ever accepted this blood-money or not we do not know, but it would seem not since it is said the old man stubbornly refused to leave the precincts, housing himself in a narrow cell over the great gate, where he lingered until 1553, dying at last almost within the shadow of the great abbey, now dismantled, silent, and forlorn.

Kirkstall, in spite of Abbot Grimston, was never a wealthy house, and at the Suppression its net annual rent roll was only seventeen thousand dollars. The lands and ruins were granted early in the reign of "Saint" Edward to Cranmer and his heirs, from whom it passed in a few years to the Crown, and was granted again to William Downynge and Peter Ashton. The Savilles were the next holders and from them it passed through the Duke of Montague to the Earl of Cardigan, and finally in 1888 was sold at public auction, being purchased by Colonel North of Leeds and by him presented to his native city to be used as a common recreation ground forever.

Sad indeed is the fate of Kirkstall Abbey, where so many generations of men have prayed and toiled and wept over their sins and the unceasing blows of adversity, now contending on unequal ground for a share of popular interest with band-stands, ginger-pop, and penny-in-the-slot machines. Yet in spite of its environment, in spite of the tainted waters of what was once a "delicate river, calm and clear," the clanging trolley-car, encroaching ranks of sordid tenements, foul smoke from factory chimneys, and a general atmosphere of sporting papers and the great unemployed, it lifts proudly and with

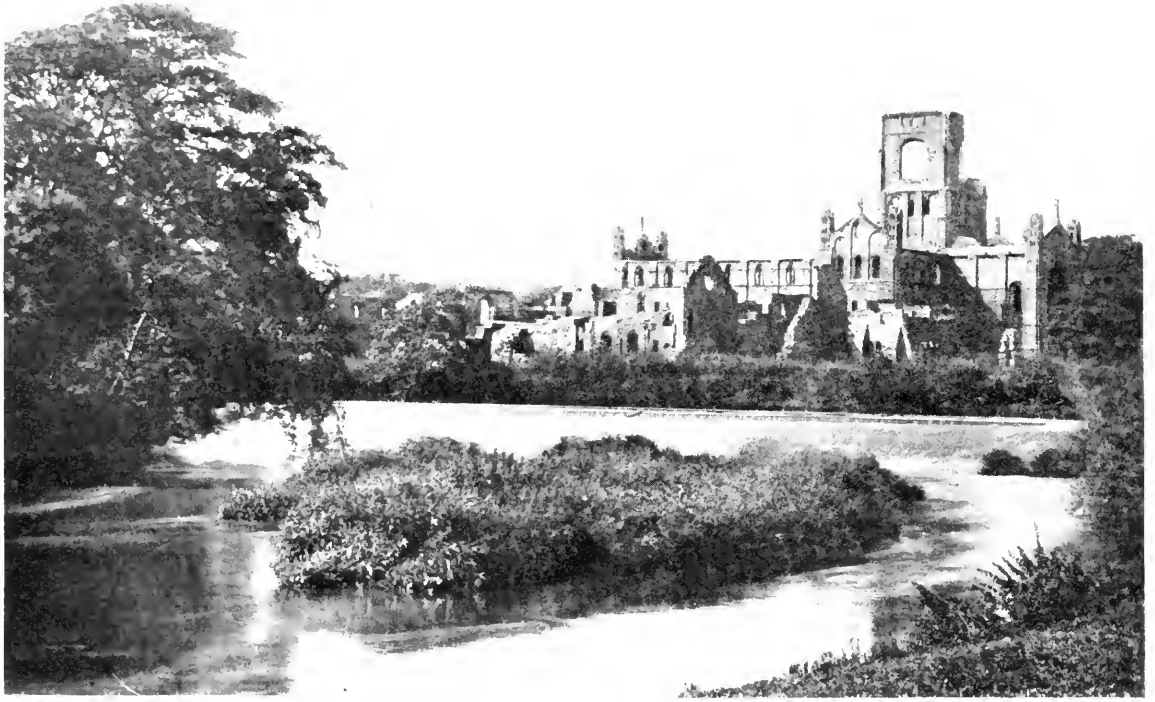
invincible dignity above the miasma of triumphant industrialism. Cleaning and tinkering and the fussing of careful custodians cannot destroy its solemn majesty, or neutralize its eternal teaching power. In their wreck and desolation the stones preach, even though the human voices that once sounded within are hushed and silent forever.

It was not so in the nineteenth century, perhaps, but men's ears hear now much that was inaudible then. In a conscientious work by a worthy Professor Phillips, I find the following cheerful and philosophical reflections which may serve to show the curious gulf that has opened so suddenly and unexpectedly between the last century and our own.

"Since the day when Henry de Lacy brought the Cistercians to this sweet retreat, how changed are the scenes which the river looks upon. Then from the high rocks of Malham and the pastures of Craven, to Loidis in Elmete the deer, wild boar, and white bull were wandering in unfrequented woods, or wading in untainted waters, or roaming over boundless heaths. Now, hundreds of thousands of men of many races have extirpated the wood, dyed the waters with tints derived from other lands, turned the heath into fertile fields and filled the valley with mills and

looms, water wheels and engine chimneys! Yet is not all the beauty of Airedale lost; nor should the thoughtful mind which now regards the busy stream of the Aire lament the change. The quiet spinner is happier than the rude and violent hunter; the spirit of true religion fills these populous villages, as well as once it filled these cloistered walls: the woods are gone, and in their place the iron road; but the road conducts the intelligent lover of beauty to other hills and dales where art has had no contest with nature, and, by enabling him to compare one region with another, corrects his judgment, heightens his enjoyment, and deepens his sympathy with man."

One may question, perhaps, the accuracy of the antithesis beween "the quiet spinner" and the "rude and violent hunter"; doubt even, while threading the devious purlieus of Leeds through the smudge of stifling smoke, the universality of the contemporary "spirit of true religion," but of the magnificent periods of the final demonstration of the essential services rendered by "the iron road" the exalted truth can never be gainsaid.



Kirkstall Abbey as seen from the river.

ST. MARY'S YORK

OF the thousands who go yearly to see the city of the northern province to wonder at what is indeed one of the noblest of English cathedrals, how many realize that down by the river and just without the line of the ancient city wall, forgotten in the gardens of an archæological society, stand the few scarred fragments of a church that, though an hundred feet shorter than the "Minster," was not only incomparably more beautiful viewed as pure architecture, but was as well the most beautiful church in England and one of the most perfect examples of consummate architecture in the Christian world.

The fragmentary nature of the wreck explains, perhaps, the perfect oblivion that has fallen upon these ruins; but at least one might give a few minutes of his time to visiting what still remains, if only in tribute to the fact that it stands for one of the wonders of the world, entirely extinguished and wiped out that the "Defender of the Faith" might acquire an access

of wealth and later build over the fields he had devastated and from the rubble to which he had reduced the most wonderful art of man a shortlived pleasure house, gone now as utterly as the incomparable masterpiece so incontinently done to death.

To-day the Benedictine Abbey of Our Lady of York, once the richest of all monastic foundations in the north of England, consists in the crumbling wall of the north nave aisle, one tower pier cut short at half its height, a fragment of the west end, and nothing more whatever, except a few stones of the chapter house and such foundations below the floor level as have been exposed through the diligence of the present owners of the ruins. This is all that remains in place, but fortunately it is not everything. By some whim of chance an enormous number of fragments have been picked up here and there, dug out of the earth, redeemed from walls where they have lain for centuries as makeshift building material, traced far without the limits of the city and restored. These precious vestiges have been gathered together and now form, some of them, retaining walls and decorative borders in the garden, whilst others are piled together pell-mell in the lower story of the monastic guest house, cheek by jowl with Roman tombs

and heathen altars. They are unique, these shards of glory, not only in their number, but in the almost unimaginable beauty of their art, and they serve as an heart-breaking hint of the inestimable loss the world has suffered in the savage destruction of one of its noblest monuments.

The ruin that overwhelmed York Abbey was prompt, terrible, and condign. The whole vast property with the dreamlike church and majestic monastery was retained by the Crown, and the fairy buildings themselves were doomed to destruction after they had been rifled of their splendid plate, their hoard of sumptuous embroidery and needlework, their stores of parchment and vellum folios and manuscripts. The vast conventual buildings, wonders of masterly architecture, were blown up and levelled with the ground; and over their site was erected a new palace for the king, the carven stones being roughly hewn down to fit them to serve as mere rubble for the walls. This palace, or rather the major part of it, was speedily destroyed after Henry died, and that which was left was joined to the abbot's lodgings, which were largely rebuilt and made into a residence for the "Lord's President of the North." Under James I. extensive changes were made, and again

under Charles the Martyr. What remains has now become a school for the blind.

In the meantime the church itself had been left, in all probability, to fall slowly into ruin, such portions as were available being used in the various schemes of royal building and reparation, whilst the town's folk were given leave to fetch such stones as they could drag away to aid them in building their houses, sheds, and styes. With the eighteenth century the final raid began: in 1701 York Castle, being in need of repairs, levied on the church itself; four years later the insignificant church of St. Olave nearby followed the same course and for the same reason. George I. graciously granted to the Minster and to St. Mary's, both in Beverly, so much stone from the ruin as they might need for their extensive repairs, and finally, early in the nineteenth century, the destruction not progressing fast enough, lime-kilns were set up, and for years sculptured stones worthy to stand in the British Museum by the Elgin Marbles were given to the fire that they might acquire a commercial value when transmuted into quick-lime.

It is a biting commentary on the civilization of the nineteenth century that this sacrilege and vandalism went on without a protest until the year 1827, when the Yorkshire Historical So-

York—The High Tide of Christian Art.

ciety asked for and obtained the site of the awful destruction. This society did not exhibit an instant appreciation of its opportunities, for it forthwith proceeded to erect a neat and elegant Greek temple over the ruins of a portion of the fratry and refectory, but as time went on its eyes were opened and the fact became apparent that there might be other items of archæological interest in ancient Eboracum besides Roman *cippi* and the fragments of pagan altars. The land where once the choir stood was added to the Society's holdings, and consistent excavation began with the result that a great store of wonderful sculpture has been unearthed, whilst to-day the entire foundations of the eastern arm of the church, together with those of a small portion of the monastic buildings, have been exposed. It will be necessary to remove the Society's building itself before these excavations can be continued, while small houses that now cover the site of the chapter house must also be demolished. The older buildings also of the school for the blind should be taken down in order that the material from the abbey may be sorted out and some portions perhaps restored to their original position.

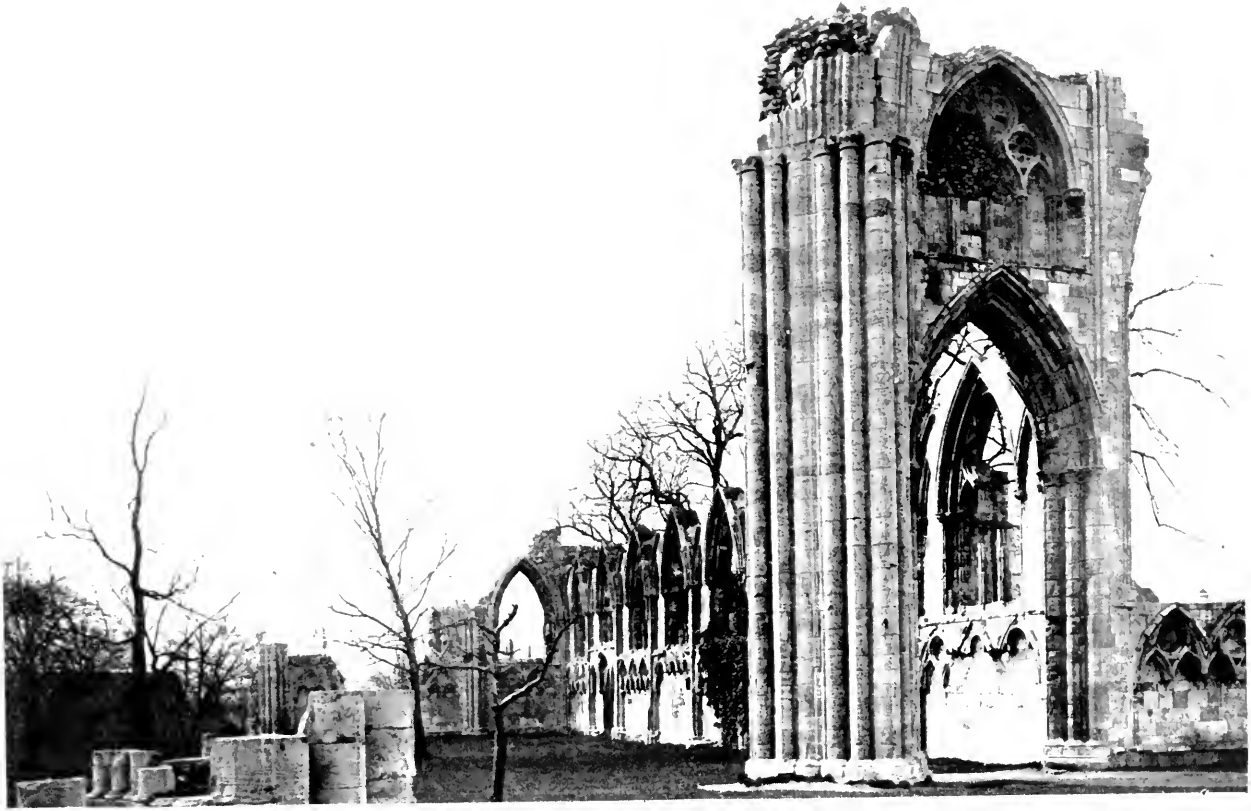
As one passes through the narrow alleys adjacent to the church, one finds in every wall

stones unquestionably from the abbey itself, nor are they confined to the immediate vicinity; all over York they crop out in unexpected places, some of them used even as copings for garden walls or built into the abutments of bridges. The fierce centripetal force of sacrilege and irreligion has hurled them wide over an enormous area, but stone by stone they are being brought back and given in charge of a Society conscious at last of its sacred trust. As one pores over the scattered fragments, the passionate desire asserts itself to mark each broken stone and try if by patient care it would not be possible to rebuild at least one entire bay of the nave in order that it might stand as an everlasting monument of the highest point reached by the Christian builders of England.

In the undercroft of the hospitium, as I have said, has already been gathered together a mass of marvellous material. I do not like to criticise any action of a Society that has shown itself conscientious and careful, but I must submit that even now it is not fully realized that these vestiges of mediæval art are infinitely more precious than mere classical remains. In this same undercroft, piled in unorganized, unidentified heaps, black with the sifting coal-dust of the neighbouring railway, thirteenth, fourteenth,

and fifteenth century work all jumbled together in dusty chaos, are some of the most perfect examples of English mediæval art to be found in any place. In some instances the dirt of their long sepulture still clogs the carving of caps, bosses, and statues, each one of which is well worth preservation under glass. It is only by digging down into the casual heaps that one may find what actually exists. In simple truth it may be said that here are gathered together more precious fragments than in any other place in England. Let us realize the paramount glory of our own great thousand years of civilization, forget, though only for a day, the charm of our classical period, and do a laggard honour to the immortal achievement of our immediate forbears. From the architectural fragments now at hand and, please God, soon to be acquired, it might be possible to restore the nave order of St. Mary's or, if not that, at least to lift some portions of the walls and shafts a few feet higher above the turf. From the shards of sculpture logically arranged and conserved, it would be possible to form a chronological sequence of national styles out of examples of each period at its noblest and best. The opportunity is glittering in its possibilities; is there none who will lead the way?

It really seems that this is true, the apparently careless statement that all the work at York was of the best, whatever its period. Why this should be true is hard to say, though we know that the Benedictine was the richest order in England and the one most devoted to the advancement of learning and art, whilst St. Mary's was one of the richest of all Benedictine houses. It would seem that whenever anything was done here it befel that it should be at the best possible time and that the Abbots of York were content with no workman who was not a master in his own art. Go down into the hospitium undercroft and look around; it is impossible to catalogue the treasures, but here is a tenth century font of singular value, consigned to the stone heap at the recent restoration of Hutton Cranswick church, and fortunately recovered; here are Anglo-Norman doorways, caps, and lintels from the old chapter house of the abbey, unique in their richness and originality. Here are scores of caps, corbells, and vaulting bosses, mostly thirteenth century, wrought in a fashion that stops the breath with wonder and admiration, each one of them more exquisite, more masterly as absolute art than any bit of carven acanthus or honeysuckle from the Acropolis or the Forum. Against the piers are ten life-size



York The Last of the Tower Piers.

statues of prophets and evangelists, fourteenth century work, strong and powerful, a part of the great lines that once were ranged rank on rank down the triforia of the abbey church, once blazing with colour and gold, now ashen after their long interment beneath the ruins of their tabernacle. Most wonderful of all, amongst a horde of smaller statues, a mutilated fragment of a statue of Our Lady and the Holy Child, so consummate in its faultless art that it deserves place with the masterpieces of sculpture of every age and race. Finally here are great pieces of canopied altars and sedilia of the fifteenth century, in black Derbyshire marble wrought like fine lace, as pure in their cutting as a Greek intaglio and marvellously preserved, every line as sharp to-day as when it left the sculptor's chisel. Here in this dim and sooty undercroft is an epitome of the English art of four centuries, precious and beautiful beyond the power of words to describe.

There seems somewhat of the providential in the manner in which these things have been preserved. There is unmistakable evidence that many hands laboured at the Suppression to save a few vestiges of that which they were hired to destroy. The triforium statues were carefully buried together down amongst the foundations

of the church and covered by a mass of shattered window tracery cemented together with the very material used in the building of Henry's transitory palace. The marvellous bosses of the warming-room had also been buried together in the same fashion when the monastery was razed to give place to the royal dwelling, whilst the marble canopies were found carefully built into walls in such a way as to prove they were given place not as building material but solely for their own preservation from the fate that overtook the major part of their fellows, which, as Thoresby records, were "sold by parcels to statuaries and others for common use." There is something infinitely pathetic in these evidences of humble appreciation of a great art doomed to annihilation, on the part of those who, clearly against their will, were forced to be the instruments of the destruction of the things they loved. Their names may never be known, the names of the poor men who did their best to save a statue or a bit of lovely carving, but they deserve a mass for their charity and for their love that has proved not all in vain. Also, and more materially, do they merit a more tender custody of those things preserved to us by their gentle piety and their faithful care.

Shall we try to restore, in words only, the Abbey of Our Lady of York?

The walls of the close rise sheer from the river, and above them only a glimpse is seen here and there of pale, vaporous towers emerging from deep masses of foliage. Entering the water-gate and passing under the big arch of the guest house we find ourselves suddenly fronting a gentle slope that rises towards what almost seems a citadel, so vast is it in extent. The view is bounded on either hand by low detached buildings, so that we are in a kind of vast and irregular quadrangle, the upper side of which is formed by many low structures strongly buttressed, pierced by windows full of delicate tracery, rising to the left into a lofty gable rich with intricate panelling, fretted with the glimmering light and shade of deeply cut caps and bosses and crocketing, and decked with many statues. Above all, crowning the composition and tying it all into an aspiring pryamid, lifts a single lofty tower with its lance-like spire flashing in the sky. Here in a world of green trees and greener turf rises a thing like clouds and sea mists, a mystical presence commingled of fire and snow, for it is all of pearly white stone, marble in all but name, that has softened into a silvery radiance in its exposed parts, while the

hollows of arch and cap and archivolt have deepened into a golden ivory that glows here and there as deep as amber. This is no fortress shrine of granite or ruddy freestone or harsh black flints; it is a wonderful vision of the New Jerusalem compact of alabaster and mother-of-pearl. Pure, crystalline, gleaming like sea foam, it is a vision, not an actuality in time and space.

In the base of the wall is a single door; pause long enough to note the almost passionate carving of the vines that creep up the hollows behind the shafts and at the top spring suddenly outward to wreathe themselves into involved capitals; no more lovely carving than this can be found in Athens or far Cathay; if it should perish now, if by some terrible tragedy it were to be calcined by fire or worn by wind and rain, what would not the world lose?

We enter: at first nothing is visible except a kind of wash of palpitating colour, back and forth between enclosing walls, then, little by little we are able to establish ourselves, for details are taking form in the luminous dusk. We are standing in the lay-brothers' church, the six westernmost bays of the nave; the great rood screen closes the view to the east up as high as the spring of the aisle arches, but above all is open and the eye pierces on and on past the

York The West Front.

gigantic Calvary flashing with colour and gold, through slanting lines of myriad-coloured light from the clerestory windows, until it centres on the eastern wall that is as though it were wrought of precious stones Aladdin himself could not replace. For eight wide bays the delicately chiselled shafts with their soaring arches march towards the great and lofty arches of the tower, and beyond they begin again and continue for nine more bays, three hundred and eighty feet in clear length, the whole wrought of the pale stone that here has softened to the hues of old ivory. The great vault branches and curves above, the natural colour of the stone almost hidden by an embroidery of colour and gold, from the midst of which glow proud heraldic achievements, gules and azure and or. Down the triforium arcade are ranged countless figures of saints and prophets, painted, all of them, and bright with burnished gilding, while the colour of the vault creeps down over arch and wall until the whole church is one wonder of ivory stone and all the hues of the blossoming fields, the metallic iridescence of butterflies' wings.

Brilliant though it is, — no half tones, no timorous tertiaries, — the eighty-six windows of clerestory and aisle with the four vast openings in nave, choir, and transepts, all filled with

painted glass smouldering with ardent fire on the south and west, cool with the myriad hues of sunrise mists on the north and east, throw ten thousand pencils of living light across the still air where smoke-films of incense still curl and linger, blending all in one resonant chord of full colour that is like music in its poignancy.

Enter the south aisle and, footing the pavement of brilliant tiles, go down to the transept. Here to the south the sun pours full through the great window forty feet in clear height, a tide of living light that breaks against the fretted screen of the monks' choir. To the left opens out all the wonder and mystery of the crossing, the Titan shafts like sheaves of giant spears rising to the four huge arches wrought into subtle curves and hollows, the shadowy transept stretching far away into silvery mist dyed with the carmine and silver and ultramarine of the storied windows. To the east, under two of the arches, are little chapels, each with its altar decked with richest needlework, each with its golden candlesticks, its fresh cut flowers, its reredos of chiselled stone or gilded wood, thick with statues of vested saints, and voiceful with emblems and symbols of the Redemption.

The third arch gives on the processional aisle stretching far away to the east, and here, as also

in the transept, are myriad tombs and shrines, and memorial brasses in the tiled floor. Here is a bishop's tomb wrought of alabaster, the effigy of my lord himself stretched on the top, mitre on head, cope decently folded by his side, a jewelled crozier prone along his arm. Here lies a cardinal, his tomb thick set with glimmering mosaic, his red hat hanging from the vault above, the silken tassels waving slightly in some breath that strays in from an open door. Here a knight and his lady sleep in a common tomb, a great sword and an helmet, black now with years, suspended above.

You must walk justly here, for the tombs are very many and each is as beautiful as it is given to man to fashion. Farther to the east we find altars against the terminal wall, every one some masterpiece of art, with votive candles and flickering lamps burning always before them. The north aisle is as the south, and the north transept as well, except that here is the altar of Our Lady, most beautiful, most marvellous of all. Enter the doorway in the screen of the choir. Thus far all has been in a way without the pale, here we approach the centre of all things. The slender shafts, the curling arches, arcade, triforium, clerestory, and vault, are the same: ivory, gold, and pulsating colour; but here

all is enclosed by the choir stalls of oak, each shaded by its canopy, a miracle of marvellous fashioning, carven, inlaid, picked out with colour and gold, an ordered jungle of intricate foliation that balks the imagination with its revelation of the powers of man when these are used in the service of God. Side by side, scores of them in all, they stand ranged in order away to the east, where they give place to fellows of finely wrought marble, spired, pinnacled, charged with bright coats of arms and the deceitful semblance of all the flowers of the field. Here the stalls are backed and cushioned with silk brocade; blazing banners of rich needlework, banners both martial and ecclesiastical, hang above and cast long shadows over the tombs of bishops, abbots, and the great of earth, tombs that are set thick with little statues, each in its canopied niche, proud with the martial array of ancient escutcheons, or draped, some of them, with splendid palls of wonderful needlework that cost the labour of twenty hands for half that number of years.

And what shall we say of the high altar and its reredos? Go to Winchester; look on what is there, rising forty feet and more sheer from the pavement and reaching from wall to wall, then imagine this flickering with burnished gold and blazing with pigments, fronted with great

Malmsbury—The Norman Door.

gold candlesticks, flanked by others of bronze and ivory, with silver lamps hanging in front like so many flame-bearing angels, and you may have some idea of what once was in this place.

We may go into the cathedrals still left us and from their bare stone shafts and vaults, their few defaced tombs, dusty and faded, their tall windows where spaces of wonderful colour still remain surrounded by dead fields of plain glass, their few and cheerless altars shorn of all colour save that of a frontal, it may be, gain some pale, inadequate idea of what once was before the days of Henry the Scourge of England, but nowhere can we find a hint of the unspeakable glory that once characterized cathedral and abbey, when colour, apotheosized, covered them like the vesture of kings, and the oblations and memorials of a thousand years filled them with the wonders of art and with haunting memories.

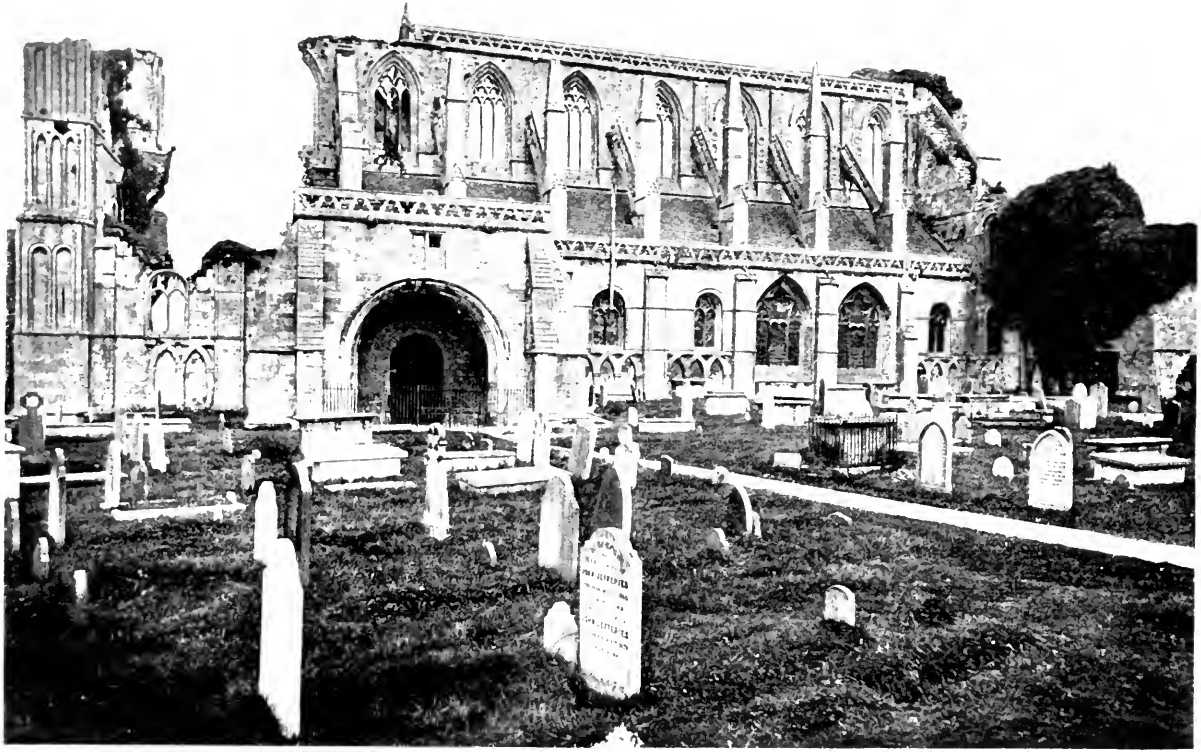
But the real glory of York Abbey lay, not in its accessories of glass and sculpture and carving, tapestry, brocade, and needlework and all the artifice of the goldsmith, the jeweller, and the scribe, but in the singular and quite consummate nature of its architecture. Founded just after the Conquest, by the monks of Evesham under the protection of Earl Percy, the abbey was

altogether rebuilt in its final form by the great Abbot Simon of Warwick who ruled for forty years, *viz.*, from 1259 until 1299. During these years the first epoch of Gothic mounted to its zenith, and York Abbey stood as the crowning achievement of the style. From this wonderful work every hint of Norman and every trace of French influence had disappeared. Of the hard mechanism of Salisbury no suggestion is visible, while the grave and almost ponderous majesty of Whitby and Rievaulx had given place to a wonderful lightness and spaciousness. It may almost be called transitional, for it shows the first movings of the spirit of the fourteenth century and so may claim kin not only with the "Nine Altars" of Fountains and Durham, but with Gisburgh as well. If it failed at any point it was in its west front, the remains of which, except for the greater arches, indicate a certain hardness and mechanical quality curiously suggestive of Salisbury and strongly out of harmony with all that is within. I am almost inclined to assign to this west front a date fifty years earlier than that given to Abbot Warwick's work, as though a new front had been built for the ancient church before the great rebuilding of 1270 was begun, and that this front when overtaken later by Warwick's masterpiece was incorporated

therein and only partially changed, chiefly by the insertion of new windows and doors.

In spite of minor criticisms, however, the fact remains that the destruction of York Abbey meant the elimination not only of one of the most beautiful buildings in the world, but also the obliteration of a page in English architectural history we can ill spare. Sure, serene, competent, perfect in its proportions, exquisitely organized, marked by subtleties of design in the sections of piers, the arrangement of mouldings, the placing and modelling of ornament, a perfect type of sound, strong, and sensitive English Gothic, York Abbey was a national monument the æsthetic and historical value of which was beyond computation. It is with feelings of horror and unutterable dismay that, as we stand beside the few existing fragments, realizing the irreparable loss they make so clear, we call into mind Henry's sacrilege in the sixteenth century and his silly palace doomed to instant destruction, the crass ignorance and stolidity of the eighteenth century with its grants of building material, and the mercenary savagery of the nineteenth century when from smoking lime-kilns rose into the air the vanishing ghosts of the noblest creations that owe their existence to the hands of man.

The tale of St. Mary's Abbey ends on the 26th day of November 1539, when William Dent, twenty-ninth and last abbot, surrendered the glory of Yorkshire into the hands of Cromwell, at which time there were fifty monks on the rolls, one hundred and fifty lay brothers and servants, and a great number of families dependent on the abbey for their maintenance. At this time the annual revenues amounted to something over one hundred thousand dollars.



Malmsbury—The Shattered Nave

MALMESBURY

IN writing of England's abbeys it has been my intention expressly to exclude those that are now "in commission" in any sort, whether as cathedrals or as parish churches, leaving these for study perhaps at some future time. It might seem that this rule should exclude Malmesbury, St. Aldhelm's first Benedictine foundation in Wiltshire, but a chance visit to its desolate site proved that such exclusion was quite unnecessary. Roofed in and enclosed is a part of the nave indeed; a makeshift "Communion Table" is posited against a roughly plastered wall; heavy pews clog its narrow area, and stove funnels thrust themselves through traceried windows, some of which are filled with crude stained glass, while there are other instances of occasional and mechanical use, but these things are so manifestly a mere matter of legal formality they enhance the wreck of glory rather than mitigate it.

Malmesbury is a ruin, no less in its spiritual than in its structural aspect. Once a vast erection, three hundred and thirty-two feet long,

with a nave of nine bays, a great crossing, and a choir of five bays, all crowded with altars, screens, and tombs, and none too large for the scores of monks and *conversi* and faithful laymen, it is now a mutilated stump of six nave bays, terminating at either end in brute walls of cheap masonry. The wonderful fifteenth century rood screen is gone, its place taken by a blind wall of plaster. Gone are the twelve altars of richest workmanship; and in their place is a thing like a small packing box covered with grey canvas, railed in by a kind of high fence, with two big square footstools or "ottomans," one at the south end, one at the north of the "Table," and flanking all a huge crude chair covered with red reps on either hand. A Brobdignagian eye, like some secret society symbol, is coarsely painted on the east wall, with a frame containing the Commandments on one side and a second with the Lord's Prayer (or maybe the "forbidden degrees," I do not quite remember, but the connotation of the place would suggest the latter) on the other. Not a candlestick, vase, flower, or even cross appears to indicate the nature of the crash-covered packing box; the dust of ages lies in the red-druggeted "Sanctuary," and all is forlorn, miserable, neglected.

Never have I seen such evidences of dull indifferentism and spiritual death. All around are the tottering fragments of shattered majesty, preaching the faith and devotion that once rendered the enormous church all too small, now a moiety thereof is ample, and well it may be; for the dull horror of the place is so repellent it is impossible to imagine taking part in the worship of God in such an environment.

Curiously enough, and as though by some singular mercy, it became necessary for us to hurry across country from Wiltshire into Oxfordshire; we arrived in the evening at a little town of which, through deep ignorance, we knew nothing except that it contained an old Augustinian priory that was still in use. Finding a lodging for the night near its low walls, we inquired of the landlady if the church were open at that hour. She looked at us with some surprise and replied "Certainly, Sir, there'll be festival vespers there in an half hour for tomorrow is Corpus Christi, when there will be a sung mass at eight." Greatly marvelling, and bearing in mind that which we had seen in Malmesbury, we entered the church to the sound of summoning bells, and found ourselves in a gaunt, ascetic place, casual and irregular in plan, bearing many marks of former desecration,

but still a church of God, no less. An high altar covered with flowers and candles gleamed in the chancel, and by some magic minor altars filled the side chapels, while little shrines, each with its flowers and hanging lamp, were fastened to the columns of the nave. Statues, banners, sanctuary lamps, the faint odour of old incense, all told their grateful tale. The people gathered, the bell ceased, and presently a long procession of priests in cassocks, scholars in gowns (amongst whom we noticed a perfectly black negro) entered, passed to the Lady chapel on the right, chanted antiphonally the first vespers of the festival, and departed. At eight the next morning there was a "sung mass" indeed, with all the adjuncts of a devout congregation, blazing lights, rich vestments, incense, and all the splendid old ceremonial so compelling, so convincing of the "historic continuity" on which we so often lay stress in words. What had we found? Simply a parish church in charge of a missionary college. And in these antitheses, in Malmesbury and in Dorchester, we found as well a living evidence of the old that is passing away, the new-old that happily is taking its place.

It is somewhat unusual however to find in the hoary old abbeys that have been preserved for public worship, in whole or in part, the

degree of perfect restoration to the older modes we found in the tiny Oxfordshire village. Usually the standard approaches more nearly to that of the lamentable Malmesbury, though in a most glorious old abbey in the south, Romsey, of immortal tradition, the Dorchester type was in full evidence, with splendid altars, perfect accessories, and a constant sequence of services from morning until night. Shrines like these hearten one mightily after sad experiences in such contrasting places as desolate York Cathedral and poor pathetic old Malmesbury.

And so we must count the latter as amongst the ruined and deserted abbeys of Great Britain. It is a melancholy fact that this should be so, for in its history and its architectural quality it called for a happier fate. Almost thirteen centuries ago the hill of Ingelborne Castle was consecrated to religious uses by Maeldulph, a Scottish hermit and philosopher, who, driven from the North by the harassing of robbers and pirates, built himself here a cell and gathered around him a little group of devoted scholars. And the studious atmosphere thus early brought to Malmesbury never departed for the space of nine hundred years, when it was very effectually exterminated by the first English "Defender of the Faith" and gave place to the weav-

ing of cloth. St. Aldhelm, the pious and learned monk and Bishop of the West Saxons, master of Greek, Latin, and Saxon letters, master of oratory, master of music, was the founder of the Benedictine monastery whose ruins have fallen into such sorry case, and was buried here after his long and wonderful life on earth had come to an end. The devout King Athelstan with his cousins Elwin and Ethelwyne found sepulture within its walls. Duns Scotus, the witty Scot, William of Malmesbury, the great chronicler, Elmer, the monastic Icarus who made for himself a certain flying machine, on the first essay of which he fell "and brake both his legs," were all identified with this place. Early in the thirteenth century Malmesbury had its own "hostel" in Oxford, and for hundreds of years thereafter a steady stream of students went down to the University from the great Malmesbury schools. Some indication of the high value set on university degrees is obtained from one record that tells how in 1298 a Benedictine monk from Gloucester on taking his degree of D.D. at Oxford "was attended by the whole of his convent from Gloucester, the Abbots of Westminster, Evesham, Abingdon, Reading, and Malmesbury, and an hundred noblemen and esquires on horses richly caparisoned."

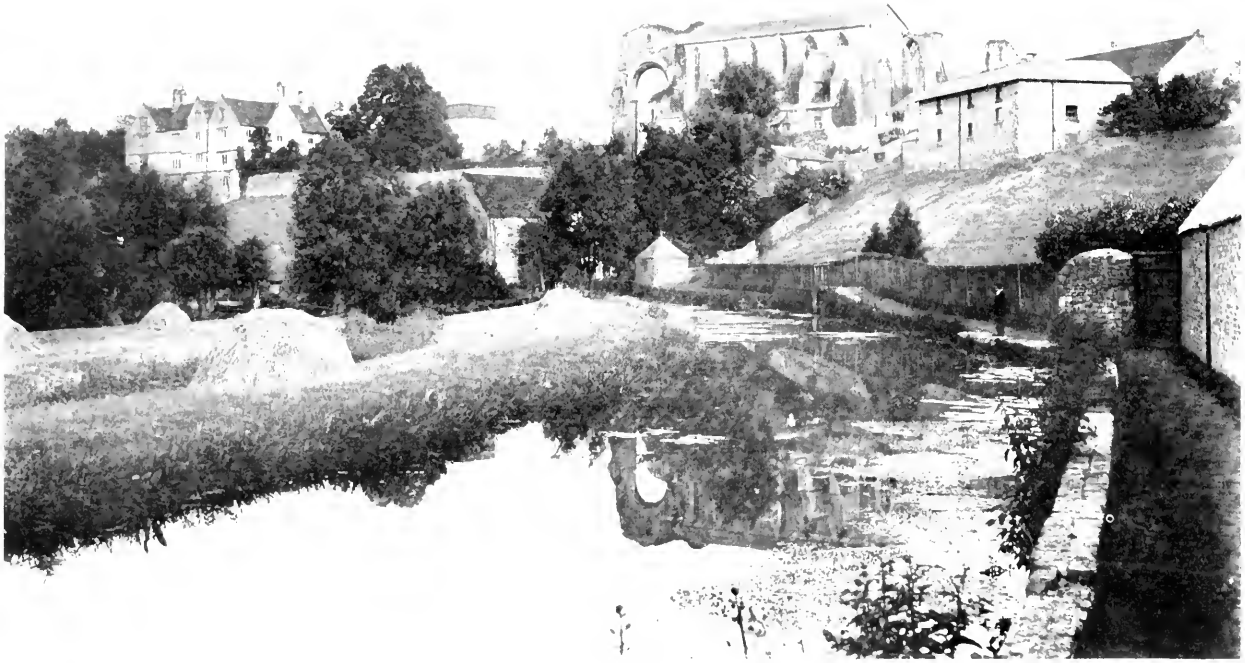
What the library must have been we can only surmise from certain terrible details of its total destruction. That it was vast and magnificent, even for the Middle Ages, we know. For four hundred years the monks had laboured in scriptorium and "carel" translating, engrossing, illuminating, and binding their wonderful works in tooled and gilded and jewelled covers. Fuller testifies that "the English monks were bookish themselves, and much inclined to hoard up monuments of learning." Of no house was this so true as of Malmesbury. At Ramsay, a smaller monastery, there were for choir use about seventy breviaries, one hundred psalters and hymnals, thirty-two graduals, thirty-nine processionals. The number of copies of the Holy Scriptures, theological books, and works on law, history, and grammar, together with volumes of the Greek and Latin classics must have made up a huge library. This was destroyed even to the last folio, and wilfully. Aubrey writes of the terrible tragedy: "In my grandfather's day the MSS. flew about like butterflies. All musick bookes, account bookes, copie bookes, etc., were covered with old MSS. and the glovers at Malmesbury made great havock of them; and gloves were wrapped up, no doubt, in many good pieces of antiquity.

Mr. W. Stumpe," — the great grandson of the clothier who had purchased the dismantled abbey more than a century before — "had several MSS. of the abbey and when be brewed a barrell of speciall ale his use was to stop the bunghole under the clay with a sheet of the MS." *

From another source we learn that years after the Suppression a traveller passing through the town found that even the bakers had not consumed all the abbey books in heating their ovens, whilst he saw many broken windows patched up with the remants of the most valuable manuscripts on vellum. The loss in this direction alone has been incalcuable, irreparable, and final, not only from a literary and historical standpoint but from that of art as well, for it must be remembered that these hundreds of thousands of volumes that went to feed bakery fires and stop bungholes in ale casks were each and all of them the result of years of devoted labour, and as such, works of the most precious art, exquisitely engrossed on vellum, embellished with delicate illumination, and bound in covers sometimes of solid gold or silver, wonderfully wrought, and studded with jewels.

After reading the pitiful narratives of the

* Aubrey: "The Natural History of Wiltshire."



Malmesbury Abbey.

destruction of such monastic libraries as this at Malmesbury, one can hardly wonder how it was that in the first years following the Suppression "whole ships full" of manuscripts on vellum and parchment "were sent over seas to the bookbinders" and yet that enough remained for local consumption for generations. The "Revival of Learning" was manifesting itself at last in its true colours, though after a somewhat unexpected fashion.

Centre of learning that it was, Malmesbury Abbey, with the exception of the abbot's lodgings and stables, was by the "King's Magesty" as recorded in the "Survey" in the Augmentation office "deemed to be superfluous, appointed to be razed and sold." The entire monastery with its gardens, orchards, and park were purchased, however, in one lot by a certain "William Stumpe, clothier," for a sum so out of proportion to the ordinary market rates of the time for this kind of commodity that one suspects there must be some mistake. The price is recorded as £1117, 15*s.* 11*d.*, rather more than thirty thousand dollars to-day, which, for the time, was a good deal to pay for a lot of useless buildings that would cost perhaps two million dollars if the attempt were made to reproduce them to-day to serve as a particularly glorious

and majestic type of cathedral. Mr. Stumpe was farseeing, however; the extinction of the great abbey left the people without spiritual ministrations of any kind, and, feeling at first the need of these (custom dying but slowly), they induced the clothier to sell them the nave of the abbey to use as a parish church. The conventual buildings and the more sacred parts of the abbey were turned into a mill for the weaving of cloth under Mr. Stumpe's directions, tenements for his mill hands were erected over the gardens and orchards, new streets were cut through the precincts, and altogether it would seem that the thrifty citizen was probably by way of making a good thing of his investment. Whether he did or not we do not know, but in any case his fortune was not of a permanent type, his direct descendants being on record as common labourers in Malmesbury early in the nineteenth century.

After the death of Mr. Stumpe, the conventual buildings were, of course, turned into a stone quarry. In 1650 Aubrey speaks of fine fragments still remaining, but to-day not a sign is left, except the abbot's lodgings, which have been rebuilt and now serve as an imposing and beautiful private house. The utter wreck of the church itself dates from comparatively

recent times. There was formerly at the crossing a great central tower "with a mighty high pyramis, a mark to all the country about," twenty feet higher than the spire of Salisbury. This "pyramis" fell shortly before the Suppression but without injuring the tower itself or any portion of the walls of the church. At the time of the Great Rebellion the whole fabric was comparatively complete though of course only the nave was in use, while the spire had gone, and a portion of the west front. Malmesbury held loyally to the King and was furiously bombarded by Cromwell, as a result of which the western bays of the nave fell down and the tower was further weakened. On Restoration Day, 1660, the tower collapsed owing to "so many volleys of shot loyally fired" and apparently the abbey was then reduced to the present mutilated stump, every vestige of choir, transept, and tower being swept away except the great arch to the nave and that to the north transept.

Since then the abbreviated trunk, shorn of its towers, choir, transepts, chapels, and west front, has stood a forlorn reminder of happier and more pious days; within the last few years something has been done towards a kind of restoration, but the direction taken by these laudable efforts is somewhat startling, though

unquestionably significant. One would have thought, perhaps, that funds would have been expended towards the east, the south and east arches of the tower rebuilt and temporarily enclosed, thus presenting a decent chancel where might have been erected an altar, respectful at least, and reverent, even though simple and unmarked by the connotations of "Puseyism." But no, the packing box within its painted fence and beneath the secret-society emblem was enough to meet the law, so the money subscribed went to the rebuilding two of the bays of the south wall of the nave that had been thrown down by Cromwell's artillery. Of course these bays lay quite without the enclosure of the present church; they were simply a replication of the other bays of the nave; they could serve no purpose, devotional or architectural. Why they should have been chosen for restoration is a question beyond solution, unless it was that being towards the town their absence caused a shocking gap in the visible wall, while, rebuilt, they would enhance the neatness and respectability of the common prospect. Well, ideals change and incumbents also. Which is to blame for the present shocking state of Malmesbury? I do not know, but let us hope the time will come when the rebuilding of the abbey will

Malmsbury—The Nave that Oliver Cromwell wrecked.

begin afresh and towards the east, so that the future pilgrims may not be scandalized by the evidences of archæological interest in combination with religious indifferentism.

The holy hill of Malmesbury has known many churches, several of them standing grouped together when the vast shrine of St. Aldhelm, the remains of which still exist, first came into being. The first little wooden church of St. Maeldulph, built in 637, was still standing, as was also the finer stone church erected by St. Aldhelm himself. William of Malmesbury, who died in 1112, declares it then to have been superior in size and beauty to any ancient church in England. It was in this church that King Athelstan and his line found sepulture. Two other churches, the one dedicated to Our Lady, the other to St. Michael, stood close at hand, St. Aldhelm's tomb in St. Mary's, St. Maeldulph's in St. Michael's. Yet a fifth church, built for the use of the townspeople, was dedicated to St. Andrew, and in this were buried the exiled Greek archbisop, Constantine, and, for a time, Abbot Brithwald II., fourteenth in succession. Unfortunately for him, however, his tomb was so haunted by "fantastic shadows" that the townspeople rebelled and, breaking open the tomb, cast the unquiet ashes into a distant

marsh. Whereupon peace descended upon St. Andrew's once more. Finally, towards the end of the eleventh century, the great abbey was begun, either under Turold, a monk of Fécamp, or Godfrey of Jumieges, the student and creator of the enormous library that was sometime to become the pride of English monasticism.

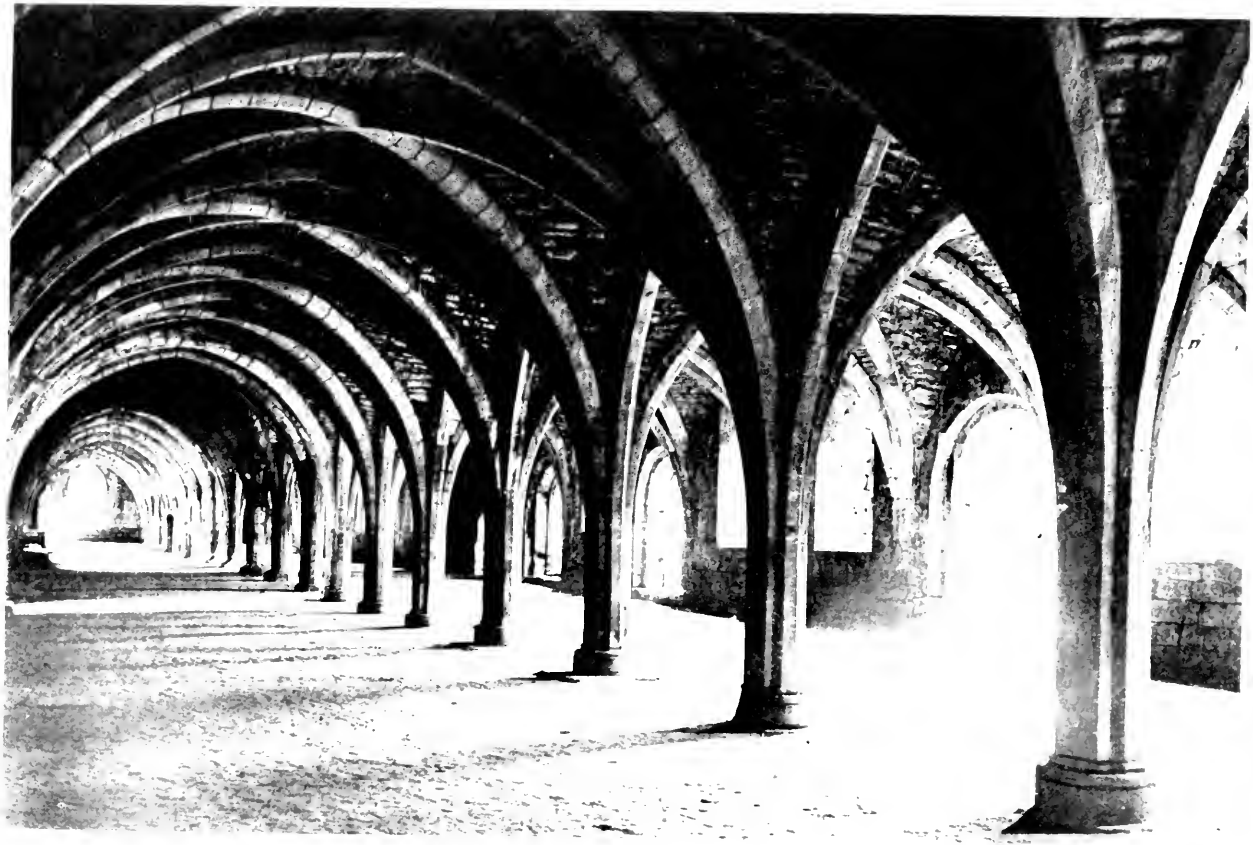
As then laid out, St. Aldhelm's remained to the end, but above the triforium level many changes took place through the succeeding centuries. Probably the work progressed slowly down to the middle of the twelfth century; it is all a heavy, rich and massive type of transitional Norman, with enormous circular piers, bluntly pointed arches, and vaulting shafts resting on the pier-caps. In the fourteenth century a great transformation took place, though under which abbot we do not know; at this time the entire Norman clerestory was removed and in its place was substituted a great range of pointed windows and a stone vault, for the support of which fine flying buttresses were flung out over the aisles; at this time delicate wave-patterned balustrades of open tracery were applied to the copings of nave and aisles. In the fifteenth century the transformation continued: a gigantic window was inserted in the west front, the tower was raised and surmounted by its proud

"pyramis," taller even than Salisbury spire. As so often happened, however, ambition here overtopped itself, and very shortly the spire fell without, however, injuring any portion of the church. Towards the end of this century a wonderful rood screen, evidently similar to the work in the chapel of Henry VII. at Westminster, was set up between the presbytery and the nave; this was removed after the Suppression and inserted under the west arch of the tower. Now here a question suggests itself. This very site is now filled by a rough wall covered with blank plaster. If the great screen was indeed placed here, is it not here now, only slabbed over with lime as happened in Oxford and elsewhere? The possibility is engaging and adds another to the list that might become operative were Malmesbury Abbey now in more reverent hands.

Malmesbury at the Suppression was one of the most majestic abbeys in England, though by no means one of the richest, its resources being but about twenty-five thousand dollars yearly. The monastic buildings covered an area of six acres, while the orchards, gardens, and "warren" comprised forty more. The cloister, upwards of an hundred feet square, with all the monastic buildings lay to the north

on the very brink of the precipitous hill down the sides of which crept the industrial offices to the brink of the river, where one of the many mills is even now in commission. Of all this, as I have said, nothing now remains, thanks to Mr. Stumpe, except one humble mill and the remains of the infirmary; streets have been slashed ruthlessly through all the abbey precincts, shabby houses crowd toward its walls, and only a few feet of land remain about the shapeless ruins in sad memory of the once vast estates once held in trust by the Benedictine order in the name of the holy St. Aldhelm. At the close of the fifteenth century Malmesbury must have stood second to Durham alone for majesty of situation and grandeur of aspect, with its far flung monastery crowning the hill-top and rising from terraced orchards and gardens, the huge bulk of St. Aldhelm's church with its triple towers looming over all.

Malmesbury was not one of the abbeys which, "when the devil was sick," had been destined for preservation as a cathedral; but it might well have been, not only from its location but because of its splendid history and traditions and its majestic beauty. It will be remembered that, when Henry was importuning Parliament to give him the greater as well as the lesser houses,



Fountains — The Undercroft

he had caused it to be bruited abroad that of his piety and generosity he would reestablish many of the great houses as cathedrals. The list included some twenty monasteries; as soon as the bill was passed the list was withdrawn and only Westminster, Oxford, Chester, Gloucester, Bristol, and Petersborough actually became see cities, though seven other cathedrals which were included in the king's list and served by Benedictine monks were turned over to secular canons. Of the $80,000,000 acknowledged as received by the Augmentation Office from the suppression of the monasteries, but $500,000 went to the endowment of new bishopricks. Forty million dollars were used for the army, navy, and the prosecution of foreign wars, whilst thirty-five million were turned into the king's private purse to be expended by him at will and after the unsavoury fashion the details of which have fortunately been preserved for our instruction and edification.

Malmesbury Abbey was surrendered to the king on December 15, 1539, by Robert Frampton and his twenty-one monks; the abbot accepted a pension amounting in the money of our time to almost $8,000 per year, the munificence of the amount being undoubtedly due to the faithless abbot's complaisance, cheerful or other-

wise, in the royal schemes. The prior received $600 annually, the monks but $350. Under Mary I. but seven still survived to draw the pensions then continued to them by Cardinal Pole.

OUR LADY OF THE FOUNTAINS

AS we began this cursory study of the monastic remains of Great Britain with Glastonbury, so is it fitting that we should bring it to a close with Fountains. South and North, Benedictine and Cistercian, the two abbeys represent the highest point achieved by the two great Orders that had so much to do with the building up of that great epoch of Christian civilization that covered the wonderful thousand years of mediævalism. Together they restored society and civilization, laid the foundations of British character, and made possible that community of interest and consistency of action that established British nationality. Fountains falls short of Glastonbury in the glory and significance of its founding, in the splendour and versatility of its history, in the grim tragedy of its death; all monastic foundations must, for Glastonbury stands alone in England amongst those peaks of unspeakable majesty that rise above the plateaux and foothills of history, but in every other respect it is singularly eminent, while it can

claim place with Glastonbury as with other immortal houses through the martyrdom at Henry's hands of its last abbot, William Thirsk; Marmaduke Bradley, who nominally succeeded the murdered abbot, being but a creature of Crumwell's, installed by him for the accomplishment of the ruin of Fountains.

Unlike Glastonbury, unlike nearly all other existing ruins, indeed, this great Cistercian house has fallen at last into the hands of a Roman Catholic nobleman, who sees something in the forlorn wreck besides its possibilities as a sheep-walk, and who treats it with the most tender and reverent regard. It has passed through many hands since the year 1540, when it was granted to Sir Richard Gresham, for the curse of failure of male issue in families holding monastic estates has held here as elsewhere. In 1846 of the six hundred and thirty families to which monastic estates had been granted, only fourteen had not been extinguished through failure of male issue. Since then several more have come to an end, and whether we attribute the fact to judgment or coincidence, it is certainly notable that shame, disgrace, violent deaths, and total extinction have followed the names of all those who took part in the Suppression, from the House of Tudor, through its agents, the Lords spiritual and tem-

Fountains—The XVI. Century Tower.

poral and the Commons who made up the Parliament in the thirty-first year of Henry, "by the Grace of God," etc., etc., "Defender of the Faith"* down to the lay holders of the stolen estates. Now that the Marquis of Ripon holds Fountains in trust the steady decay has stopped and every stone is cared for: the site of the high altar is cleared, the pavement there relaid, and on occasion mass is said within the empty walls, while pious pilgrimages to the sacred ruins are encouraged and duly welcomed. Lord Ripon has done everything to make these ruins speak to the deaf ears of the twentieth century. Not only is there everywhere the evidence of devout care, but plans and explanatory notes are placed at various points, and facilities for refreshment have been thoughtfully provided, since they are made necessary by the isolated position of the ruins. In every way a generous welcome is extended to all visitors, and so Fountains stands as the most attractive shrine in Great Britain for pilgrims to the sad memorials of a wonderful past. Close at hand has arisen, also at the hands of the same nobleman, a new church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and though the monastic habit is no longer seen in field and wood, nor is there any sound of convent bell or the chanting of the

* Vid., Sir Henry Spellman: "History of Sacrilege."

hours, still the Divine liturgy sounds over the lands once consecrated to the religious life, and some day, it may be, part of the sacred ruins may be rehabilitated and the Rule of St. Robert become operative again within the domains of "Our Lady of the Fountains."

For absolute beauty of site and architecture and for pure pictorial quality combined, this abbey stands easily first of all in Great Britain. From Ripon three miles away, one walks out through a shady road to a foot-path that strikes to the left to the little village of Studley, where we reach the gates of Studley Royal. Thence the walk is through a fine old park, under huge oaks, by placid waterways, through winding and flowery paths, out through the little valley of the Skell, until of a sudden, far away, framed by forest and fronted by a doubled river of still water and deep grass, rises the ghost of the great abbey, a silvery vision, silent and alone. As you approach by the winding path the abbey disappears now and again, only to reveal itself from some new point, so the approach is a long succession of changing pictures, the last view of all being from the highest point of the path, whence one looks down upon the vast ruin and the wide expanse of shaven turf wherein are traced the lines of foundations of buildings long

since destroyed, or from which rise the crags and shards of others fortunately preserved from a similar fate. No piles of fallen masonry encumber the ground, no trees rise in court or nave or choir, no ivy mantles the walls; the vivid picturesqueness and unearthly poetry of Netley, the tragical desolation of Whitby and Rievaulx are wanting. Fountains depends for its power on the sheer wonder and beauty of its architecture and the fortunate forms into which the ruins have fallen, but these are sufficient, and for once one does not miss the adjuncts nature has added elsewhere to enhance the glory of the traces of man's consummate handiwork.

Fountains owes its existence to the great religious revival of the first quarter of the twelfth century, which made itself visible through St. Robert, St. Bernard, and the vast line of Cistercian monasteries founded by them and their successors. It was not a case of one man, even were he a St. Bernard, rousing a dormant world by the clarion of his own word: it was a great general movement amongst all peoples, showing itself everywhere at the same moment. St. Robert, St. Stephen the Englishman, and St. Bernard were the organizers of revolt, the directors of action, the perpetuators of the victory. It was in 1132, only four years after St. Bernard

had sent his first monks to England, and less than a year after these had appeared in Yorkshire and, under the protection of the great Turstan of York and by the generosity of old Walter l'Espec, had settled down at Rievaulx, that discontent and the impulse towards reform showed themselves in the abbey of Our Lady in York, a Benedictine house then less than fifty years old. Richard the prior, with the subprior and eleven of the brothers, revolted against what seemed to them the unrighteous ease and comfort that obtained under the abbacy of Geoffrey, an old man weak in discipline, under whom the monastery had got rather out of hand. To Turstan of York they went, of course, as did every one of that day who needed spiritual succour, and at their instigation the archbishop fixed on the 6th of October, 1132, for a formal visitation. Abbot Geoffrey was old, but his craft was still with him, and he made of the threatened visitation a test of abbatial *vs.* episcopal authority. When the bishop arrived with his suite he was met at the gates by the redoubtable old abbot and a great throng of religious, gathered hastily from neighbouring monasteries, and refused admittance unless he came alone, if come he must. But Turstan was a match for Geoffrey; he refused to submit to dictation and

Fountains—The Choir.

entered the cloister. The tumult rose almost to the pitch of a riot, which was only quelled when the archbishop thundered out an interdict against the whole monastery and then solemnly entered the church and took possession, with all his train.

Of course after this open quarrel, Richard and his twelve brothers left at once, taking nothing with them but the clothes they wore. At first Turstan looked after them and housed them in his own palace, but, learning that Geoffrey had appealed to the Papal legate and that he had also succeeded in winning back one of the thirteen (whose place was immediately filled by Robert of Whitby), he determined to remove them from the neighbourhood of the implacable old abbot and so took them to an estate of his own near Ripon and, midwinter as it was, assigned them a portion of the land as their own. Forthwith they elected Richard as abbot, said farewell to the good archbishop, and took up their abode, first in the little caves of the rocky cliffs, later under the shelter of a cluster of enormous yew trees, weaving hurdles between the trunks for makeshift protection. Even then the trees must have been six or seven hundred years old, yet at the end of the eighteenth century seven still remained, and two

stand now, fourteen hundred years old, having seen the coming of the monks and their going, waiting, it may be, only for their coming again.

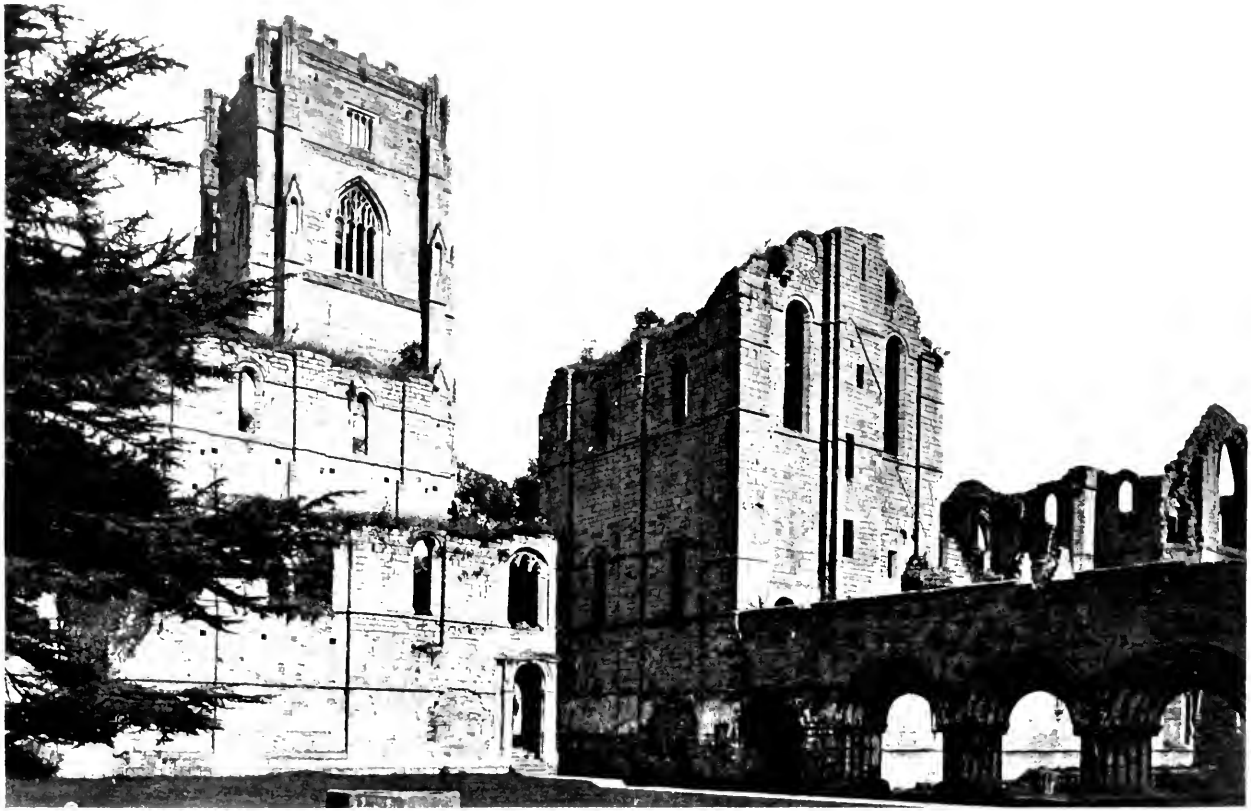
If hardship and austerity were what Richard and his men had sought, they received full measure. Turstan sent them bread at intervals, and the Skell gave them water. They worked doggedly at redeeming the utter wilderness, sometimes with food, more often without. They accepted St. Bernard as their spiritual lord, and he sent them another Geoffrey to teach them the rule and direct them in the building of a proper house. Their numbers increased rapidly, but no money was forthcoming; what is now a smiling garden was then an horrible wilderness, in spite of their labours, and the earth refused to give them nourishment. Finally, after two years of superhuman exertions with no material returns, they found themselves reduced to living on boiled leaves, and then, and only then, they surrendered, and Richard went sorrowfully and in person to St. Bernard himself to ask that the unlucky community be taken bodily to France and given one of the granges of Clairvaux in that milder land. The prayer was granted, but when Richard reached home he found that the need had passed. None other than the Dean of York had entered the monastery, bringing a

fine library and much money. Immediately two canons followed him and, as says the chronicler, old Serlo of Kirkstall, "from that forth and thenceforward the Lord Blessed our valleys with the blessing of Heaven above and of the deep that lieth under, extending the vine and giving to it showers of His benediction."

The days when, sitting around a pot of boiled leaves, the brothers could sing *Te Deum* at the providential arrival of a cart load of bread from Eustace Fitz John were gone. They had been tried and were not found wanting. One day, when a poor pilgrim had begged for food "in the Name of the Blessed Saviour," the almoner had gone to the abbot with word that but two loaves and a half remained, and that these must go to the lay brothers when their work was done. "Give the poor man one loaf, and let the workers have the rest," said Abbot Richard, "as for ourselves, the Lord will provide." So it was done and in answer came Fitz John's load of loaves, and much else besides, for now wealth flowed in apace and the numbers increased by leaps and bounds. In four years began that founding of new colonies that is such an evidence of the vigorous life in mediæval monasticism. Newminster was established in 1138, Meaux in 1150, and between them five other houses, including

Kirkstall, owed their existence to the reproductive power of the great abbey that had grown from the wattled hut beneath the yews, of 1132.

Richard died and went to his reward in 1139; Richard II. followed in 1143, and was succeeded by Henry Murdac, under whom the first abbey was built, and burned as well, for the partisans of Archbishop Fitzherbert of York, who had been deposed by the Pope in 1146, accusing Murdac of being implicated in his fall, had attacked the monastery and, failing to find the abbot, though he was prostrate in prayer before the high altar, had applied the torch to the then unfinished buildings. Abbot after abbot followed in swift succession, for all were old men when they were chosen, and the monastery was repaired and completed on the original lines. During the reign of Ralph, seventh in succession, a terrible famine fell on Yorkshire, and all the abbey lands were crowded with little huts where the poor took refuge, living on the bounty of the monks until a better harvest put them on their feet again. Then followed three abbots whose names will be forever remembered as those of the men who rebuilt Fountains in the splendid style of the thirteenth century: John of York, 1203–1211; John Pherd, 1211–1219; and John of Kent, 1219–1247. John I. rebuilt the



Fountains.—Within the Cloister-Garth.

choir on the fine lines now only indicated by the existing aisle walls; every trace of the primary arcades, with triforium, clerestory, and vaulting, has gone, but we can still see from what is left how brilliant and original was the work. But the great glory of Fountains lies in the terminal transept to the east, the Chapel of Nine Altars, one of the noblest creations of Gothic art in England. Classical in proportion, perfectly organic in development, possessed of that inevitable quality that marks great art of every age and style, it is as spontaneous and supple as fifteenth century work and demonstrates perfectly the sometimes forgotten fact that the builders of the thirteenth century could and did rise to the highest levels of supremely creative and poetic art. We sometimes think of this as a hard style and circumscribed by narrowing laws; as a matter of fact the laws were only such as were necessary to curb the tendency of men towards lawlessness. They hampered no man who was really great, while they prevented weak men from going far astray. The fashion in which John of Kent handled his problem here at Fountains marks him as a truly great architect: the carrying of the lines of the main arcade of the church across the transverse chapel by means of two arches borne on a single

lofty shaft of consummate design shows an imagination, a grasp of the large laws of architecture, and a power of composition that appertain only to the greatest men. It is a wonderful thing, this "Nine Altars," and one of the loveliest in England.

Not content with this supreme triumph, Kentish John continued during his long abbacy the labour of glorifying his house: the cloister, now wholly gone, was his, also the huge infirmary, the guest house "for the reception of the poor of Christ, as well as the princes of the world," and many other of the multitudinous buildings that at the Suppression covered an area of twelve acres.

For two centuries after the death of the great abbot-architect, John of Kent, Fountains grew steadily greater in its reputation for learning, sanctity, and charity, richer in land and herds. At the Suppression the home estate reached westward for a distance of thirty miles from the very walls of Ripon; in Craven the lands comprised sixty-four thousand acres in one estate surrounded by a ring fence; other of its landed property lay in no less than two hundred and forty lordships. Let it be remembered that the major part of this land was absolute wilderness when it came into possession of the monks of

Fountains, and that it had become rich farming land, under a high state of cultivation and supporting thousands of tenants, when Henry seized it for his own ends. The abbey close comprised eighty acres, and adjoining was a park of two hundred acres. At the Suppression there were found at Fountains 2,356 cattle, 1,326 sheep, 86 horses, and 79 swine. The annual revenues were equivalent to about sixty-five thousand dollars of the money of to-day; the gold and silver plate, nearly all in the shape of sacred vessels and ornaments, was valued at about forty thousand dollars.

Architecturally the abbey stood at pause during these two centuries: it was not until the abbacy of John Dornton, 1478–1494, that work began again, and then in a shape we can hardly accept with satisfaction; marvellous as must have been the enormous east window, sixty feet high and twenty-four feet wide, which he introduced in John of Kent's "Nine Altars," it did much to destroy the unity and consistency of the design, and the same is equally true of the high windows at the north and south ends; on the other hand, his big west window must have added greatly to the effect of the nave. Marmaduke Huby, who next succeeded, was even more ambitious as an architect, but, instead of

transforming the old, he immortalized himself by an entirely new work which is one of the supreme beauties of Fountains and his own enduring monument.

Originally, of course, no well regulated Cistercian abbey might glory in a real tower; no provision was made for this luxury at Fountains, and when, in spite of slight foundations, a central tower was finally raised over the crossing, trouble began to develop; huge abutments were hastily reared to strengthen the sinking fabric, but they were evidently inadequate; the tower was taken down, and, as at Evesham and Glastonbury, a totally new structure was reared at the end of the north transept where adequate foundations could be obtained. At Rievaulx the new tower was, I think, an isolated campanile at the angle of the south transept, elsewhere it took its place at the west end of the nave; but Abbot Huby's tower is the only northerly one that still stands, if we except Evesham, which is complete, but which has lost every trace of the church to which it was once but an adjunct.

Huby's tower, though the scaffolding must have been but lately removed when the vast church was abandoned to destruction, is a thoroughly noble piece of design, perfect in its proportions, delicate in detail, in no wise over-

Fountains: The Shards of Majesty

loaded or overwrought, a masterpiece of quiet dignity and power. It dates entirely from the sixteenth century and is another evidence of the vitality of architecture up to the very day when it came to an end under Henry VIII. Originally it bore some forty statues in as many niches, together with many beautiful texts, finely cut in "black-letter." Entrance to this tower was by a great arch filling the whole north end of the transept and rising to the very roof; to-day the view across the transepts through this splendid archway is one of the most perfect things at Fountains, for out of the blaze of sun we see deep into a space of gloom broken by the slender tracery of a lofty window, where painted glass has given place to a screen of weaving branches and flickering leaves, a new "*vitrail*" of emerald and gold.

One more abbot sat at Fountains, William Thirsk, who was elected in 1526, served ten years, and then, being found recalcitrant by Henry's emissaries on their first visitation, was arbitrarily deposed and his place given — or rather, sold — to one Marmaduke Bradley, who, offering Crumwell six hundred marks, and through him the equivalent of sixty thousand dollars to the king himself, as the price of his preferment, was found by them to be a man

after their own hearts, on whom they might depend later. The king simply had to have Fountains; that was all there was about it; its wealth, its lands, were exceedingly desired by the "Defender of the Faith," the only question was how to get hold of them. At this time, it must be remembered Henry was only experimenting in confiscation: none of the greater abbeys had been attacked, but the returns from the smaller had been encouraging; the new nobles were clamorous; the king's needs were pressing, and the only money in sight was that which might be obtained in one way or another from the monastic orders. Fortunately for the king, rebellion broke out against his course; and in the suppression thereof he learned that his power was greater than he had imagined and that he might safely indulge himself to the full.

The first general uprising occurred in Lincolnshire, though Northumberland has the honour of claiming the first rebellion against the king's authority, when the town of Hexham rose as one man to defend its abbey. England had begun to realize what the suppression even of the smaller monasteries meant. The sight of the outrages that accompanied the seizure of the little houses was too much for the people; they had conceived an hatred for the "Vicar Gen-

eral," of whom they said "there is no earthly man so evil believed as the said Lord Crumwell is with the commoners," that had burst all bounds; they were particularly incensed against the prelates Cranmer, Latimer, Hilsey, and Allen, whom they charged with heresy and schism and feared as exponents of "the new learning;" and personally they were feeling the evil results of the Suppression through loss of religious and charitable ministrations. Naturally, therefore, they rose in rebellion; but at first they had no leader, no arms, no organization. They formulated their demands and sent them to the king, whose reply came in the persons of Sir John Russell and the Duke of Suffolk at the head of an army, and instantly the rebellion was at an end. Henry issued a proclamation of full pardon to all involved in the uprising and immediately arrested one hundred of those supposed to be chiefly involved and had them sent to the Tower. Fifty of these unfortunates, including two abbots, four canons, ten monks, and the same number of secular priests were found guilty after a form of trial and were forthwith executed.

Another revolt in Cheshire was promptly crushed by Sir Piers Dutton, and then, like a summer tempest, broke the storm in the North.

In a flash all England from the Humber to the Scottish border was in open revolt; five counties were suddenly set together in defiance of the king, in defence of the monasteries and in support of the Papal authority. And here was a leader at last, one Robert Aske, a man of good blood, enthusiastic, devout, statesmanlike in his grasp of conditions and causes, and, withal, frank, honest, simple hearted, and, unfortunately, absolutely without guile. The Pilgrimage of Grace threatened the throne itself. Henry saw at once this was no second Lincolnshire rising but determined and full-fledged revolt against his cherished policies. The whole North of England was in revolution: the list of grievances was explicit: the Suppression must cease, and the monks be restored to the houses of which they had already been dispossessed; Crumwell must be abolished utterly; the Archbishop of Canterbury and the bishops of Worcester, Rochester, and Dublin, together with all other leaders of the Reformation, deposed; and the Papal authority acknowledged throughout England.

Here was rebellion in solemn earnest: nobility, gentry, and commons flocked to the standards of the "Five Wounds" and of St. Cuthbert; in a short time forty thousand men were under

arms. York fell; Richmond and Durham fell; the great stronghold of Pomfret surrendered at last; and of all the northern citadels Skipton and Scarborough alone held out for the king. The peril was acute and ominous. Henry met it with consummate craft. Aske, true patriot that he was, would countenance no violence or bloodshed until the king should drive him to this extremity and this, Henry, knowing the temper of his own troops, was not likely to do. Instead he sent Norfolk to Doncaster with words of conciliation and promises of pardon. The plot nearly failed, for Crumwell got out of hand and wrote privately to Sir Ralph Eure that if the North did not submit at once "there should be such vengeance taken upon them that the whole world should speak thereof and take example by them," while Norfolk, evidently desiring two strings to his bow, tried to bribe Lord Darcy to murder Aske quietly and without scandal. Finally, however, the two parties came together at Doncaster. The insurgents demanded the undoing of all that had been accomplished by Henry towards the suppression of monasticism and secession from Rome, a general pardon for all in revolt, and a parliament at York for the adjustment of grievances. It would appear that Norfolk satisfied Aske and his men absolutely,

for at the conclusion of the conference the people "gave a great shout of joy," tore off their badges and cried, "We will wear no badge or figure, but the badge of our sovereign lord!"

Unfortunately for them, however, Norfolk had given the king's promises in the spirit his master had meant. He had already been reminded of the attitude he was to assume by the king's letter saying, "in the end you said you would esteem no promise that you should make to the rebels, nor think your honour touched in the breach and violation of the same." The object was to procure the dispersal of the threatening Northern army, and this was easily achieved when its leader was a man so honourable and confiding as Aske appears to have been. He was a great leader indeed, but no match for such a combination as Henry, Crumwell, and Norfolk.

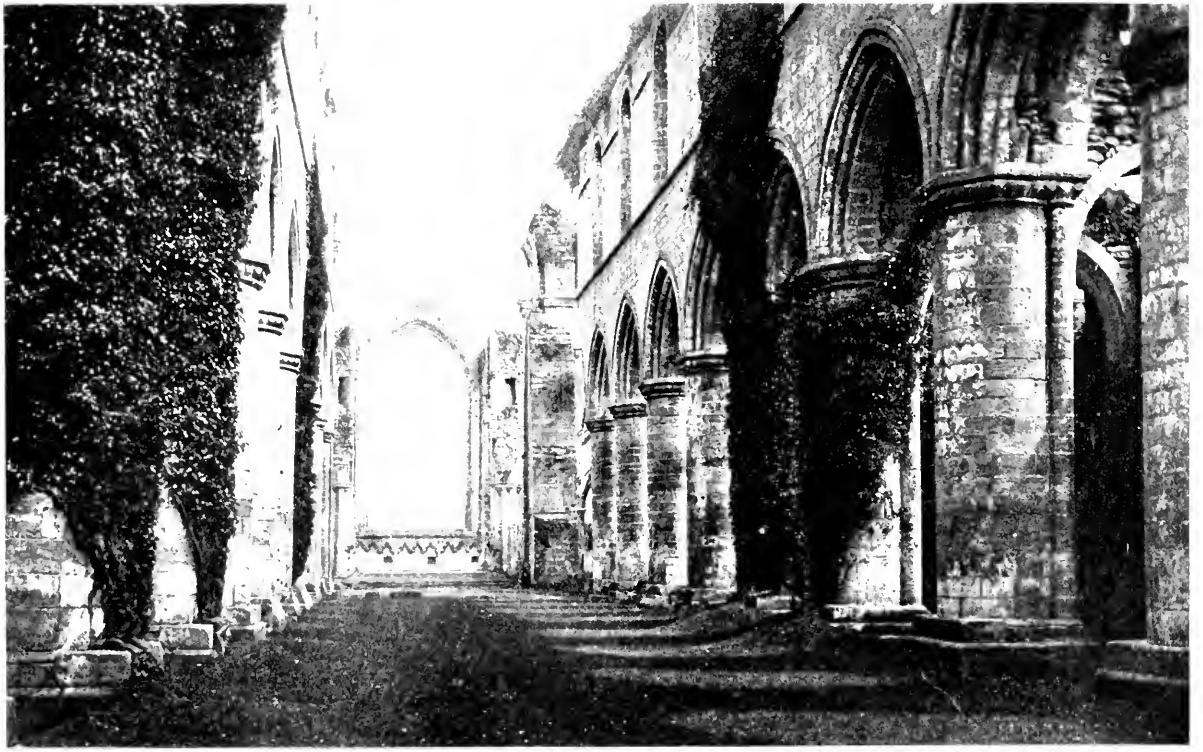
The danger passed, Henry sat down to wait his next opportunity; he knew that time only was necessary to deliver the North into his hands. Aske was sent for and journeyed to London with letters of recommendation to the king, given, as Norfolk wrote Crumwell, only "to lull the bearer into false security." Here he was treated with gentle consideration by the king, and thoroughly pumped of all his information. Returning safely he found trouble awaiting him.

Time was passing. Crumwell and Cranmer were still in high favour, the Suppression was going on smoothly, there was no prospect of a Parliament at York. "We have all been tricked!" cried Sir Francis Bigod; and, in spite of the prayers of Aske and his assurances that the king would keep his word, he attacked Hull and Beverly, failed, and was captured. Eight thousand men surrounded and assailed Carlisle and were beaten off. The king had used his breathing space well, and troops had been poured into the disaffected districts. Now his chance had come; the unfortunate and purely sporadic revolts gave him his excuse; he denounced the Treaty of Doncaster, withdrew his general pardon, and struck with instant force and decision. Norfolk fell on York like an avalanche: Aske was seized, together with every other of the leaders; martial law was proclaimed; and the butchery began. Norfolk's "only regret was that he could not find iron chains enough in the country to hang the prisoners in; ropes must serve for some. He flattered himself, however, that so great a number put to death at a time had never been heard of."

As a prelude to the slaughter, Norfolk devised a clever scheme: he had the accused tried twice, first by juries made up of their friends and kins-

men, "to prove their affection whether they will rather serve his majesty truly and frankly in this matter, or else to favour their friends, and if they will not find, then they may have thanks according to their cankered hearts;" finally and definitely, as the noble duke himself declares, "as for the other inquest, I will appoint such that I shall no more doubt of than of myself." Of course in the end all, with the exception of one Ralph Bulmer, were found guilty "of conspiring to deprive the king of his dignity, title, name and royal state, namely of being on earth the supreme head of the English Church," of endeavouring to force the king "to summon a Parliament and Convocation, and other divers high treasons," and finally of having repeated their "high treasons" after having once been pardoned.

Robert Aske, freely pardoned and innocent of any complicity in the second rising, was hanged in chains at York. The chief leaders amongst the nobles and gentry were hanged, drawn, and quartered, together with the abbots of Jervaulx and Fountains; the priors of Gisburgh and Bridlington, with many monks, also went to their deaths, and in a short space Norfolk had drenched the North with blood and crushed forever all opposition to his king.



Fountains. The Nave looking East.

It was precisely what Henry had waited for; with consummate skill he had turned a grave peril into a supreme furtherance of his own will. There is no evidence whatever that any abbot or monk was implicated in either the Pilgrimage of Grace or the second rising. They remained in their monasteries where they belonged and took no part in the great revolt of the laymen; the clergy of Yorkshire did indeed join heartily in framing and subscribing to the demands that Henry should cease from his course in ecclesiastical matters, but no overt act was ever proved against one of them. The fearful punishment that fell on the Church in the land of St. Cuthbert was for politic reasons only: it served as an awful warning; it gave the king a pretext for attacking the greater monasteries; and finally it revealed to him the possibilities of dissolution by attainder, a simple and effective source of income, as well as a facile means of extermination without the necessity of Acts of Parliament.

I have written at length of the northern uprising against Henry's policies, for it was as the immediate result of this that the last Abbot of Fountains, William Thirsk, with Adam Sedburgh, Abbot of Jervaulx, was brought to his martyrdom, marking the dawn of the reign of terror that was to drench England in innocent

blood, destroy forever the great institution that had been so closely interwoven with her very life for five centuries, and finally extinguish in an ever deepening gloom the flame of Christian art.

CONCLUSION

THE total extinction of monasticism in England which was consummated in the year 1540, was the first act in the drama of destruction, the scene of which stretches over the length and breadth of Europe. Everywhere the monastic order was breaking down, whether beneath the assaults modelled on that of Henry VIII., though more subtle in their methods, or as a result of internal corruption and its consequent disintegration. Events were marching rapidly: the temper and standards of the people were changing, and by the end of the second century following the English Suppression, public opinion had turned against the religious orders, though two hundred years of social revolution were necessary to bring this about. In another century there was none to say a word for the monks and friars, and we may admit that by that time matters had reached such a pass that few good words could honestly be said. Between the years 1830–35 more than

three thousand religious houses were suppressed in Europe, and till the end of the nineteenth century the destruction went on, urged now by the people themselves. For generations the once vast institution had been sinking lower and lower in the estimation of men, and it seemed as though its total destruction could be delayed only a few years at most.

In the meantime, however, a curious thing was taking place. Synchronously with the bitterest, and apparently final, attacks on monasticism in Italy, France, Germany, Spain, and Portugal, there appeared a sudden and utterly inexplicable recrudescence of vitality, as though the universal purging by fire had bred a phœnix from its purgatorial flames. An order suppressed sprung up anew, a house destroyed appeared in another place; passionate defenders of mediævalism and advocates of monasticism such as Digby and Maitland in England, de Maistre and Montalembert in France, came forth with their evangel to balk an astonished world. Back to England came the monks and friars under the protection of Rome; in the United States, order after order took root and thrived beneath the same control, and at last in the English Church itself, barren of monastic life for three hundred years, orders of monks

Melrose—A Glimpse of the "Presbyterian Wall."

and nuns were established, with new designations, but under the same old rule. And to-day, with the sanction of the Archbishop of York, Primate of England and Metropolitan, the most ancient Order of St. Benedict has been re-established in Yorkshire, and with such apparent strength that it has been able to send its monks across the sea, and found, also with episcopal sanction, a daughter house in a diocese of the American Church. With the opening of the twentieth century, suppression ceased, save only in France, and the re-establishment of monasticism began.

What is the meaning of this phenomenon? Is it simply that action is always followed by reaction? Is it that, surfeited by the overabundant food of the "Age of Reason," man turns in picturesque affectation to the husks and shards of a more primitive time? Many would give this answer, and yet there is another: that the consecrated religious life, formulated and fixed by St. Benedict of Nursia in the sixth century, was so formulated and fixed for all time: that he himself was led by God to add a new power to the Church, necessary then and for the future so long as the Church Militant should endure: that monasticism recognizes and satisfies an indestructible desire in the human soul,

while it rounds out and completes the mechanism of the Church on earth. In a word: monasticism is, and must forever remain,—transmuted, modified, reorganized perhaps, but essentially the same,—an integral, indestructible portion of the visible Church.

This, I believe, is the true answer to the question that arises when we are confronted by the fact that monasticism refuses to be destroyed, and invariably enters upon a new lease of life when failure, persecution and popular intellectual revolt seem finally to have signed its death warrant.

Nothing is harder than for us of the twentieth century to admit the truth of this; for almost exactly four hundred years those who have written on monasticism have been divided into two classes, they whose interest demanded that nothing but good should be said of the institution, they whose interests and emoluments demanded that nothing should be said but ill. With but few exceptions (the late John Richard Green being the most honourable of all) the historians who have become popular both in England and the United States, and who have fixed the ideas of generation after generation, have been those who by reason of their mental temper or the exigencies of their maintenance,

have seen fit to stigmatize monasticism in the violent terms employed by Gibbon, Froude, Milman, Lecky, Robertson, d'Aubigné and Voltaire. Until the nineteenth century hardly a voice, save those of continental Roman Catholics, was raised in its defence, and until 1850 it was almost impossible to find in England or America a man whose ideas on the subject were not such as might have been inculcated by Fox's "Book of Martyrs." For twelve generations we had been taught that monasticism "measured virtue by the quantity of outward exercises instead of the quality of the inward disposition, and disseminated self righteousness and an anxious, legal and mechanical religion":* that "a dreary sterile torpor, characterized those ages in which the ascetic principle has been supreme,"† that "a cruel, unfeeling temper has distinguished the monks of every age and country; their stern indifference, which is seldom modified by personal friendship, is inflamed by religious hatred, and their merciless zeal has strenuously administered the holy office of the Inquisition"‡ and that as our own Bryant carelessly wrote: —

* Schaff: "History of the Christian Church."
† Lecky: "History of European Morals."
‡ Gibbon: "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire."

"Where pleasant was the spot for man to dwell
Amid its fair broad lands, the abbey lay
Sheltering dark orgies it were shame to tell
And cowled and barefoot beggars swarmed the way."

The undoing of the work of four centuries has been a heavy task, even now far from finished. Little by little, however, the towering structure of prejudice has been undermined as stone by stone has been withdrawn from its foundations, and the toppling edifice of grotesque fiction is in imminent danger of final collapse. A subtle effort is being made to prop it up again by the new and most plausible school of essayists who deal with history in the most approved "modern" way, cementing their paradoxes with "but on the other hand," "the reverse, however, is equally true," "nevertheless we must not forget"; blocking their qualified praise with unqualified doubts, and with the semblance of judicial temper casting final discredit on that which they seem to approve. Let me quote a good example of this able and essentially modern method. "Monasticism was the friend and the foe of true religion. It was the inspiration of virtue and the encouragement of vice. It was the friend of industry and the promoter of idleness. It was the preserver of education and the teacher of superstition. It was the disburser

of alms and a many-handed robber. It was the friend of liberty and the abettor of tyranny. It was the champion of the common people and the defender of class privileges."* This is, of course, in the end as complete a denunciation of monasticism as the rank abuse of a Gibbon or a Robertson, but it will never do to let the doctrines of Maitland, Montalembert, Cardinal Newman and Dr. Gasquet supersede those fondly held for so many generations, nor must the facts they allege be permitted to speak for themselves or without a judicious commentary. No disquieting doubt must be cast upon the fact that this century is the "heir of all the ages," infinitely in advance of those that saw a St. Benedict, a St. Bernard, a St. Francis, a St. Anselm or a St. Thomas à Becket. One thing we must hold to, and that is that "this century is nobler, purer, truer, manlier and more humane than any of the centuries that saw the greatest triumphs of the monks. . . . Their superstitions and frauds concealed beneath those 'dishonoured arches' were infinitely worse than the noise of machinery weaving garments for the poor or producing household comforts to increase the happiness of the humblest man."†

* Wishart: "A Short History of Monks and Monasteries."
† Wishart: "A Short History of Monks and Monasteries."

We may question the exactness of this beautiful optimism, particularly in the year of Grace, 1905, surrounded as we are by the multitudinous revelations of private, corporate and political corruption, and we may even wonder whether Pennsylvania is "nobler" than Yorkshire at the time of Archbishop Turstan; if St. Louis and Minneapolis are "purer" examples of government than those so strongly advanced by Stephen Langton, Anselm and à Becket; if Mr. Dowie and Mrs. Eddy are "truer" prophets than St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Gregory the Great; if Standard Oil and Amalgamated Copper and United States Steel and the beef trust and the sugar trust and the Equitable are "manlier and more humane" than was the discredited epoch of monasticism, feudalism and the mediæval guilds. And as for superstitions and frauds, why, they are deplorable at any time, no less so now than in the thirteenth century, and there is ground for believing that instances may be culled from the history of certain of the above named monuments of contemporary civilization that might perhaps match the recorded cases that date from the "Dark Ages."

In spite of the energetic efforts of the able advocates who are pleading the cause of the sixteenth century and upholding the essential

perfection of the things that followed in its wake, an idea has gone abroad that after all (to confine ourselves to the history of our own race and Church) no boon, however great, was worth the price of those years of unspeakable moral debasement that intervened between the death of Sir Thomas More and the accession of Elizabeth; that a virus then entered society that did much to counteract the wholesome life that burst out again after the death of the old *régime;* and that the source of our disgrace to-day through the loss of innate moral sense, lies far back in the victory of the Renaissance over Christianity, and the corruption this victory wrought in Church and State, whereby the former abandoned her just position and surrendered to the new power of paganism that had entered the world.

There is a true and a false mediævalism, a true and a false Renaissance, a true and a false Reformation. It is necessary that we should use a little discrimination in dealing with these events, and the concrete ideas for which they stand. The false mediævalism is one which is very largely made up of elements and ideas that did not come into existence until the Middle Ages had definitely come to an end. The utter moral obliquity of the race during the malignant epoch of Edward VI., the same obliquity coupled

with savage bloodthirstiness under Mary I., the contemptuous and crushing absolutism of Henry VIII. and his royal contemporaries on the continent, the revolting crimes of the Borgia Popes, the awful simony and degradation of the episcopate and the secular clergy during the fifteenth century, all these things are postulated of mediævalism; they are assumed to be the last evidences of baleful influence of the part of the spirit of the Middle Ages. The fact is exactly the reverse; they were the work of the Renaissance, one and all, and in them mediævalism had no part whatever. The Renaissance first debauched the world it had come to destroy, then assailed it for the very faults and vices it had instilled into its being.

Nowhere is this fundamental misunderstanding more manifest than in the current conceptions of the historical development of civil government. Ask the average man what form of government existed in Europe between the years 600 and 1600 and he will reply "Absolutism; the unchallenged tyranny of the Crown founded on the doctrine of the Divine right of kings." Yet exactly the opposite is true. Absolutism was a doctrine of the Renaissance, it had no existence in fact until the mediæval spirit had been crushed; it could not exist side by side

with monasticism since this was the only democracy the world has ever known which was at the same time a pure democracy and a success. The spirit of the Renaissance demoralized the Church, paralyzed monasticism by the deadly incubus of the *commende*, and on the ruins of the sole defence of the people, operative for a thousand years, it reared the fabric of absolutism doomed to fall and disappear in a sea of blood. So long as monasticism existed as the most potent executive arm of the Church liberty, amazing as the statement may sound, was an actual fact. "The ancient world was bristling with liberty, the spirit of resistance, the sentiment of individual right, penetrated it entirely. . . . That freedom had established everywhere a system of counterpoise and restraint which rendered all prolonged despotism absolutely impossible. . . . Liberty had no existence then in the condition of a theory or abstract principle applied to the general mass of humanity, to all nations, even those who neither desire nor know her. But freedom was a fact and a right to many men, to a larger number than possess her now; and for all who appreciated and wished for her was much more easy both to acquire and to preserve."*

* Montalembert: "The Monks of the West."

The misconception on this point is fundamental and profound, and no less radical are those made in the matter of mediæval learning, economics, industrialism, land tenures, rents, wages and personal morals. In almost every case the gross evils that stained the sixteenth century and followed instantly on the suppression or debauching of the monasteries, are applied to mediævalism itself as a mark of its nature, when in actual fact they were the manifestation of the triumph of a power against which for ten centuries mediævalism had warred with singular success. As Montalembert has said so well: "It is important to free the true Middle Ages in their Catholic splendour from all affinity with that renewed old pagan despotism which still here and there contends with modern liberty. . . . An attentive study of facts and institutions will convince every sincere observer that there is less difference between the order of things destroyed in 1789 and modern society, than between the Christianity of the Middle Ages and the *ancien régime*."

Similarly is it very desirable that we should come to understand that the Renaissance is not the simple, consistent and definite movement, essentially beneficent, fixed in its point of departure, unmixed in its principles, that has been

held up for our admiration by masters of redoubtable eloquence.

The Renaissance is one of the most perfect examples of dualism history can show: "The Story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" is its perfect symbol. It was at the same time, as I have said of Cardinal Wolsey (no bad type in himself of this strange epoch) "beneficent and baleful." For years the long contest continued, the fight for final mastery between good and evil, and in the end in every nation the evil triumphed. The good reaches back, century beyond century, a consistent line of development, even to the promulgation of the Rule of St. Benedict, the evil intrudes itself only in the fifteenth century, hatching the cockatrice of neo-paganism from the egg of Christian civilization. Dante and Giotto and all that intervenes between them and Pico della Mirandola and Botticelli, are in Italy, the manifestation of this good in the Renaissance, they are the splendid flowering of mediævalism under the sun of a renewed classicism, but simultaneously a baleful planet is rising in the sky to scorch them into extinction; Medici tyrants and Borgia Popes burst over the world to blight and ban; the good of the Renaissance withers and fades away and in its place, supreme and terrible, lifts the horror of a new paganism,

empty of all its ancient virtues, a malefic miasma dooming civilization to a Götterdämmerung of three hopeless centuries. St. Thomas Aquinas has given place to Macchiavelli.

With the martyrdom of Savonarola the victory of the powers of hell was assured in Italy. The Concordat of 1516 marked the final end of the true Renaissance in France. The acceptance of Luther's leadership rather than that of Erasmus, fixes the date in Germany, and in England the execution of Sir Thomas More and the rise of Cranmer and Crumwell determines a similar period. For years the battle of Armageddon had raged. Stealthily but surely the powers of evil had been intruding into the Church and society and civil government. The pagan renaissance was triumphing over the Christian renaissance. When its hold on the Church had become final and complete by the placing of Alexander VI. in the Papal chair, the doom of Christian civilization was sealed. Like a cloud castle the mighty fabric of the Church crumbled and dissolved. Pope, cardinals, bishops, priests became, not agencies of righteousness and beneficence, but engines of destruction. From the centre of all, the virus of the pagan renaissance flowed at last into the veins of the religious life, the *commende* sapped its vitality on the continent;

profligate tools of the royal despots, now firmly fixed on their thrones, spread the pestilence through every cloister, professions almost ceased, the faithful died broken-hearted and abandoned, and the great guardian of true religion, monasticism, ceased to exercise its function. Of course there were scores of houses all over Europe where righteousness still obtained. England, spared the horror of commendatory abbots, retained a monastic organization singularly and unexpectedly pure, while its episcopate, though suffering grievously, had not fallen so low as was the case across the Channel. Nevertheless the utter demoralization of the Church consequent upon the triumph of the pagan renaissance, was breeding revolt and revolution, and we may easily admit that it is little wonder this revolution took on the form it did in Germany and the North. The evils of the sixteenth century bred, and could breed, only violent rebellion wherever the soul of man was still free of the mark of the Beast. The Teutonic and Scandinavian peoples were still unslaved, and they rose in wrath and indignation, while their roar of revolt was echoed in France and Italy. Rome, betrayed to the Renaissance, had sowed the wind. The whirlwind that was reaped was the tempest, not of a recrudescent Christian renais-

sance, but of a power owing its nature in equal measure to the very spirit that, acting in another channel, had bred the foul corruption it now burst loose to destroy.

The revolt against Divine law, against authority, tradition and implicit faith resulted first of all in breaking down the moral standards of society, state and Church and in bringing in the horrors of the pagan renaissance, but it engendered also that spirit of revolt, destruction and revolution, that equal turning against authority, tradition and implicit faith, which gave its final and obvious colour to the righteous uprising against the degraded morals that stained the Church during the later fifteenth century.

Luther, Calvin, Cranmer and Knox are not the heirs of the Christian renaissance above whose tomb rose not as a cenotaph but as the sign of insolent triumph, St. Peter's Church in Rome; the nature of the legitimate heirs we can ascertain from the group in England that went down to noble defeat, Archbishop Warham, Sir Thomas More, Bishop Fisher, Dean Colet, Erasmus. But revolution is wrought not at the hands of reformers, but at those of destroyers. The world had no use for the gentle physician, it howled for the surgeon with his knife.

The common idea of the events we are considering is that mediævalism proceeded logically to its necessary fall in the gross evils of Church and state in the sixteenth century, and that the Renaissance came as a purging flame to purify a world defiled by the principles of the Middle Ages prolonged to their logical conclusion. I have tried to show above that another solution is possible, *viz.*, that the Renaissance had destroyed what the Renaissance had created, after it had crushed mediævalism and established in its place an horrible thing that had no kinship whatever with the great triumphs of civilization. In other words that the Reformation was a case of internecine warfare, the house of the Renaissance divided against itself, not the battling of the Renaissance against mediævalism.

And in this case also, the case of the Reformation, is there not a chance to discriminate between the true and the false? No one could possibly deny that the Church of the pagan renaissance had fallen into a most terrible condition of impotence and corruption. English monasticism, stained though it was by isolated instances of deep disgrace, as in the case of St. Alban's in the year 1489, was no fair criterion, for it had been miraculously preserved from the fate of the continental monasteries. The life had gone out of

the visible Church, and in place thereof was horror almost unlimited. The Reformation could be no longer delayed if even the last elements of Christian society were to be preserved, but "reformation" could come only from the exponents of the Christian renaissance, for only they were competent to analyze causes, sift the wheat from the chaff in theological dogma, as it then stood, destroy the accretions of formalism and superstition, while preserving intact the essentials of the Catholic Faith. The moment power of action was placed in the hands of the opposite party, the party of crude mentality, of harsh literalism, of Hebraism, of defiant rebellion, of destruction for the mere sake of destruction, — albeit the party of righteous rebellion against corruption, — that moment the revolution began, and when it was finally triumphant the world was confronted by the terrible fact that the Renaissance was still in the saddle although the forms, the principles, the manifestations were changed, all but one which still endured unshaken, savage bloodthirstiness and inhuman cruelty, far-reaching and fundamental, that had grown to an awful supremacy under the influence of the Renaissance.

The true reformation lies in the revolt of the soul of Europe against the degraded morals of a

paganized Church; the false reformation in the assault on the Church as well as on its paganism.

In England there had been, for an hundred years, a chafing against the progressive ecclesiastical corruption so manifestly taking place. Yet it was almost wholly a protest against bad morals. No one took any particular interest in the dogmatic theorizing of Luther and Calvin. England was at this time the most faithfully Catholic of the nations of Europe; what she wanted was a moral reformation; she cared little for a revision of dogmas. As for Henry VIII., to do him justice, we must admit he hated theological innovations. Luther was an offence to him in 1540 precisely as he was in 1521, when he had earned the title of "Defender of the Faith" by his controversial pamphlet against the loud-mouthed monk. So far as the Catholic Faith was concerned, Henry gave it a formal adherence to the day of his death. He had declared the English Church independent of Rome, for reasons partly domestic and partly political, and considering the condition of Rome at the time, the action itself was unassailable. He had exterminated monasticism for reasons the most base and scandalous, but though he was himself the incarnation of all the moral evil of the Renaissance and though we can therefore look

on his sturdy defence of the Catholic Faith in its integrity, as evidence of nothing but an intellectual appreciation and a certain lingering good taste, the fact remains that he hated Protestantism and realized that the people hated it also. When some of them insisted that obedience to Rome was a prime essential of Catholicity, he showed them scant mercy, for he knew otherwise. He was as far as possible from being a fool; he had a particularly clear vision in theological matters, but he inherited in some way all the moral turpitude of the pagan renaissance, he surrounded himself from choice with councillors of the same temper, such as the monstrous Crumwell, and he was determined to make the Crown an absolute despotism; therefore he cut England off from Rome, and he extinguished without mercy the soundest and most beneficent institution in the Church, but he left the Faith itself intact. And here lay one secret of his success. Had he tried to establish Lutheranism in England he would have been confronted by a popular uprising, not alone in Yorkshire and the North, but in every county in England, and he would have received short shift indeed. Practically the whole kingdom, even including the monasteries, accepted the break with Rome as a minor matter so long as the Catholic Faith

was held inviolate. The people rose indeed against the suppression, but not because therein lay any attack on Catholicity, but because they looked on the monks and friars as their friends and benefactors. Bad as Henry was, it can never be said of him that he aimed in the least at a substitution of Protestantism for Catholicism in England.

The false reformation began in England when with Henry's death a child came technically to the throne, while the actual power passed into the hands of a junta of unprincipled conspirators. Crumwell found worthy successors in Somerset and Warwick. Cranmer, now unchecked in his theological tendencies, gave himself heart and soul to the substitution of the doctrines of Luther for those still held by five-sixths of the people. The monasteries were gone, and with them the strongest prop of the ancient faith. The widespread misery, poverty, and actual pauperism, their destruction had entailed, resulted in a current dissatisfaction and a smouldering fury that continually found vent in irreligion and a restless reaching out for something new, no matter what, so only it was new. Six hundred families had been raised to affluence and power on the ruins of the monasteries: to gain this reward they had become conscienceless sycophants, to

retain it it was necessary that they should prevent absolutely a return to the Roman obedience or a restoration of monasticism. The colleges, chapels, free chantries and hospitals that Henry had not yet seized were taken over by the government, while the great guilds were shorn of their lands and estates. Change after change was made in doctrine and liturgy, each towards a more evident Lutheranism. Mendicancy increased with such terrible rapidity that slavery was restored and held for two years, when the infamous statute was repealed. Rebellions broke out in Kent, Cornwall and Norfolk, and were suppressed by the aid of continental mercenaries. The king showed signs of coming to a speedy end; as matters stood Mary would succeed, and as she had announced that "Rather than use any other service than was used at the death of the late King," her father, she would lay her head "on a block and suffer death," it became necessary to eliminate her from the situation. The regent, who had created himself Duke of Northumberland, with the assistance of Cranmer, therefore prepared an ingenious plot to substitute for Mary, Jane Gray the wife of his son, Guilford Dudley, and to seize Mary herself and relegate her to the Tower. Edward, then on his death bed, fell in with the plan, debarred

both Mary and Elizabeth on the ground of illegitimacy, and forthwith died — not without some slight assistance from Northumberland, as many have believed.

The plot failed; Jane Gray was proclaimed Queen, but England rose as one man behind Mary, and she entered London in triumph whilst Northumberland's party dissolved into thin air. The Renaissance had bred a savage disregard of human life and Mary, zealously Catholic, backed by a vast majority of the nation, but meshed in plots and treasons against her faith, her crown and her very life, plots emanating from the group of reformers she had inherited from her father and brother, — Mary, gloomy, bigoted and merciless, resumed the practices taught her by her ruthless progenitor, and while restoring the old faith, to the joy of her people, protected it against heresy and treason by methods that only intensified the rage of the Protestant party, whilst winning to it great numbers of those who revolted from blood and persecution. When after Mary's short and unhappy reign, Elizabeth succeeded, she found herself bound by every policy to the party of the reformers, though she hated their theology as bitterly as had Henry and Mary. The King of Navarre thought France well worth a mass, and

similarly and with the same degree of conviction, Elizabeth thought a mass hardly worth England. The stars in their courses fought against Mary, even though she voiced the wish of her whole people. Everything played into the hands of Elizabeth, even though at first she headed a faction only. A thorough statesman, a master of perfect diplomacy, a marvellous judge of human nature, wise, far-seeing, troubled by no deep religious scruples, Elizabeth played her cards with amazing wisdom, and by subtlety and exquisite cunning transformed England from a Catholic to a Protestant nation, using the stake, the block and the dungeon without the slightest remorse, and with considerable prodigality, but veiling her executions with plausible pretexts that robbed them of the incentive power that obtained in the case of her grim sister's more frank and savage employment of the same expedients.

The suppression of the monasteries, chapels and chantries had done its work; religion, mercy and education had been entirely removed from the lives of tens of thousands once dependent upon them for spiritual leadership, mental stimulus and material benefit. Henry had never intended to substitute for the old faith the new he hated so cordially, but for reasons in no way

connected with religion he had destroyed the one force that could have held England to Catholicity.

Here then we see the bearing of this rehearsal, of history on the question as to whether monasticism was a passing episode or is an essential and indestructible portion of organized Christianity. We find that in no case has the primitive Catholic doctrine been superseded by Protestant dogma and the Apostolic polity given place to the reformed system of voluntary association, except where monasticism has either been prostituted by absolutism and vitiated by the *commende*, or, as in England, wholly eradicated; and in this last case we find that England even while in the clutch of a tyrant of the Renaissance, proved a bulwark against the invasion of German heresies until, the monasteries suppressed, the last defence was gone.

But surely we may see more than this, more that bears on the question before us, in the story of the fall of monasticism. To do so, to gain a just idea of the real causes that led to the downfall of the religious life, and to weigh the significance of this cataclysm it is necessary that we should discriminate as I have said, between the true and the false mediævalism, the true and the false renaissance, the true and the false refor-

mation. If we do this, it will become evident, I think, that the condition of continental monasticism in the sixteenth century and the fact of the English suppression have no bearing whatever on the ultimate question of the nature of the monastic idea and its permanence or impermanence. We shall come to see that in the real mediævalism, lies the root of all such elements of true civilization we now possess in common with the great ages of the Christian past: that the true renaissance was but a vivid intensifying of mediæval ideals, while the breakdown of moral and religious standards in the sixteenth century with all it meant of ruin and disgrace to the Church and righteous civil society, was the result of the false and pagan theories and practices of the victorious element of the Renaissance. And finally we shall realize that monasticism had been reduced to impotence by the same Renaissance (save only in England) which later was to extend its malignant control even over the popular revolt its own enormities had brought into being.

There is nothing in the history of monasticism from the sixth to the sixteenth centuries that gives any excuse for condemning it as false in ideal or even temporary in its usefulness, while its subsequent condition proves only that it had

gone down in defeat at last before the only power that had ever mastered it, the irresistible force of the human mind out of bondage at last to the controlling spirit of Christ through His Church.

If we put this, which is I think the true, construction, on the history of the decline and fall of monasticism, we shall be better able to study its real nature, unclouded by the confusing issues raised by those who are driven to discredit monasticism that they may so defend the events that accompanied and followed its fall. It is far from being the ideal state of man, as was held by its earliest apologists; it undoubtedly obtained too enormous a hold on the human mind, and so withdrew from secular life and domestic relations, many of the best type of men, whom civil society could ill spare. In its earliest state it fostered an unwholesome introspection and a selfish consideration for the welfare of the individual soul, but it is wrong to postulate these evils of the fully developed system when altruism had taken the place of egotism to a most unusual degree. It was never exempt from deterioration, which happened constantly, but a retrograde order instantly gave place to another that carried on the work without loss of momentum. Of human organization, and

human in its personnel, its failures went hand in hand with its triumphs, but unfaithfulness in part could never destroy the beneficence of the whole.

It is unnecessary to catalogue the list of its benefactions, for the debt the world owes to the monks is admitted now by every one. It might have been the greatest benefactor of the human race, and yet remain a thing of temporary value, but it seems to me that the nature of the work it did in upholding the liberty of the individual and the superiority of mind and soul to class distinctions; in converting innumerable tribes of barbarians and transforming them into great civilized states; in defeating every tendency towards tyranny and absolutism for a thousand years; in organizing and protecting and instigating industry and agriculture; in founding schools and universities and peopling them with students; in cherishing and preserving classical literature, fostering scientific investigation, developing the study of theology, grammar and literature; in actually creating the greatest architecture, painting, sculpture, music and industrial arts yet produced under Christianity, and in establishing a system of mercy and charity hitherto undreamed of in Europe, it seems to me, I say, that the nature of this vast and far-

reaching industry argues that the power that brought it into being was one the world may still find useful.

Monasticism possesses two aspects, the passive and the active. In its first state, as it was conceived to be by the anchorites and hermits from the Thebaid down to St. Benedict, it was a means of escape from a social condition that made spiritual advancement impossible. The essential idea was the saving of the individual soul through renunciation and through withdrawal beyond the influences of death-dealing conditions. This was, I think, St. Benedict's original and perhaps sole idea, the establishing of havens of refuge in the midst of social anarchy where those who desired might find and follow the teachings of Christ. If this was indeed his single aim he "builded better than he knew," for his will was overridden by the Will of God, and it became immediately evident that by Divine guidance he had been led to develop an institution exquisitely calculated to do the very work throughout the world the times then demanded. Monasticism forever remained a sanctuary, but its glory was to lie in its active function, its action as a great and perfectly organized society for the counteracting of pagan tendencies, the resistance to private selfishness, tyranny and crime, the

dissemination of religion, learning and mercy, and the building upon earth of the Kingdom of God.

At the same time it exerted two influences of very diverse nature: it fostered self-respect, defended the sanctity of the soul and taught the higher equality that lies beyond caste and social distinction, but it was as well truly socialistic, teaching the deep necessity of perfect co-operation, and the supreme truth that the whole is immeasurably greater than the part, exemplyfying this in its life and works and standing as a mighty proof of the power that lies in organized co-operation when ruled by rigid, fixed and immutable law.

In both these respects it has an equal work to do to-day. If we look below the show of things we come to realize that existing conditions have much in common with those that confronted St. Benedict. Beneath the splendid phantasmagoria of the twentieth century pageant of material glory lies a festering horror of economic evil, of social corruption, of political baseness, of artistic impotence and of spiritual death, and below this again as its primal and continuing cause a monstrous individualism exaggerated beyond all reason, that has resulted in an ominous downfall of religious and ethical

standards. "St. Benedict," says Cardinal Newman, "found the world, physical and social, in ruins, and his mission was to restore it in the way — not of science, but of nature; not as if setting about to do it, not professing to do it by any set time, or by any series of strokes, but so quietly, patiently, gradually that often till the work was done it was not known to be doing. It was a restoration, rather than a visitation, correction or conversion."

If we substitute for the words "physical and social," the words "spiritual, ethical and social," we shall have a good description of the world in its ruin to-day, and one may be justified in believing that the corrective brought into being by St. Benedict, under God, and that restored and recreated civilization, may still retain power to operate successfully again. Renunciation, consecration, co-operation, and all in the Name of Christ and under law Divinely ordained, these are the foundation stones of world regeneration. Marriage, individuality and personal initiative are sacred things, but there are others equally holy, and that the work of God may be done on earth it is necessary that these should yield to them so far as some men and women are concerned. In the Providence of God there are always those who can make a sacrifice of certain

joys and privileges for the welfare of mankind, and it is at least as glorious and honourable when these give their lives to the cloister for faithful labour amongst men, as it is when they forget wife and children and the exercise of their individual wills to lay down their lives on the field of battle.

And also there are those who by their native temper are unable to cope with the world in solitary conflict: who after such unequal warfare, weary and disheartened, feel the gnawing need of peace and rest: who are ready to recognize the honour and virtue and discipline of obedience as of personal and independent action. And there are women, who, lonely and unguarded, look in vain for a field of congenial action, and find nothing for them but the unequal and unwholesome contention with men in the field the latter have made their own. For all these society and civilization have provided no refuge other than that of the consecrated life.

And there is yet another and even more practical field of activity in which a revived monasticism would offer most opportune assistance. Exaggerated denominationalism has bred an impossible parochialism. In England and in America we are confronted by thousands of parish churches and mission chapels where religious

services must be maintained, since they are set in regions which cannot be deprived of the offices of a Catholic priesthood, yet cannot in spite of every effort, support in simple decency a married priest and his family. Agricultural depression in England has so reduced the stipends payable in hundreds of livings that these no longer deserve the name, and can only be accepted by priests of independent fortunes. Ordinations are falling off, religious ministrations are becoming more and more infrequent in many sections, and the people are drifting away to the "tent meetings" of itinerant evangelists supported by nonconformist bodies. Here in America there are vast numbers of parishes that pay, and can pay, only a very few hundred dollars a year; many a married priest with a wife and children being compelled to starve along as best he can on half the income of a sober brick-mason.

No one will deny that this condition of things is profoundly shameful if not actually immoral. It could be corrected by an order of religious in each diocese, living under the threefold rule, but vowed for short periods only, perhaps for three years, the vows being renewable until such time as the oblate found himself convinced of his vocation, and ready to take life-vows. Some approach to the Augustinian type would be the

best, the monks or canons being subject to the call of the bishop of the diocese at any time and for any work he might specify. With such an order at hand no parish that could not pay a living stipend to a married priest should be permitted a resident rector. It should be served on Sundays and Holydays by the members of the order acting, so soon as they left the precincts of the monastery, under the direction of the diocesan, at other times clergy could be obtained from the monastery for all works of council, admonition and mercy, but it would be no longer necessary for a priest to impose on himself and a numerous family the hardships consequent on a cure of souls that counted perhaps a score of communicants and paid seven hundred dollars or less for his ministrations.

The missionary efficiency of such "diocesan monasteries" would be enormous. What could not a bishop do with, say, twenty men, all without family ties, each ready to go forth at his call transmitted through the abbot or prior, to do such work as was laid down for him, yielding obedience outside the cloister to the bishop instead of the superior. The possibilities are startling in their magnitude.

With a system of three-year vows (at least for all under middle age) the houses of such an

order would be recruited largely from amongst the younger men; those who desired a deeper experience than could be obtained through curacies or poverty stricken missions; who feeling a call to the religious life, could not answer instantly and finally because of possible filial duties that might later become operative; who because of youth could not say whether or no they could renounce for themselves the joys of domestic life. Associated with them would be the elders, those who, left alone perhaps by the marriage of their children and the death of a wife, found themselves hopeless and astray, with no call coming to them from parishes that demanded rather, men from the other side the "age limit." From amongst these there would always be a good number convinced of their vocation and finally bound for life-vows; a nucleus of permanence around whom would gather and dissolve from year to year, the body of temporary workers, new blood coming constantly into the organism, stability and mutation working together towards the best and most vigorous life.

"Such an order would be widely different in its nature and its activities to the traditional Benedictine, Cistercian or Franciscan of history"? Very true, but different in accidents

only, not in the underlying principle, and the greatness of the monastic idea lies in its infinite adaptability to incessantly changing conditions. There is a place for the Benedictine to-day, for the Cistercian, the Dominican, perhaps even the Carthusian and the Trappist, but the demand for these comes from the individual soul. The great cry of the world that goes up to-day "How long, O Lord, how long?" is rather for a great order of mission priests who will incidentally work out their own salvation through their consecrated labour in wide vineyards already ripe for the harvest.

Monasticism then, was neither a mediæval superstition nor a passing expedient. The history of its achievements both in individual characters and in the development of civilization, leaves no alternative but the conviction that it grew under the fostering Hand of God. A just estimate of mediævalism, of the Renaissance and of the Reformation shows us what monasticism achieved for the world, how it perished, not of internal disease but at the hands of the crescent power of evil, what was lost when it fell and how humanity has suffered during the period of its eclipse and extinction.

We have studied something of the history of monasticism as it comes before us in the vine-

clad vestiges that rise like the shards of glory in the dim valleys and on the windy hills of Great Britain. May these sorrowful ruins remain to us not only as memorials of a great and wonderful epoch of Christian civilization, but as beacons of an imminent goal, as stars of evening that sank long ago in the west only to rise again as dawn stars, heralding the coming day.

Laus Deo.

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